

JAMES WOLFE

MAN AND SOLDIER



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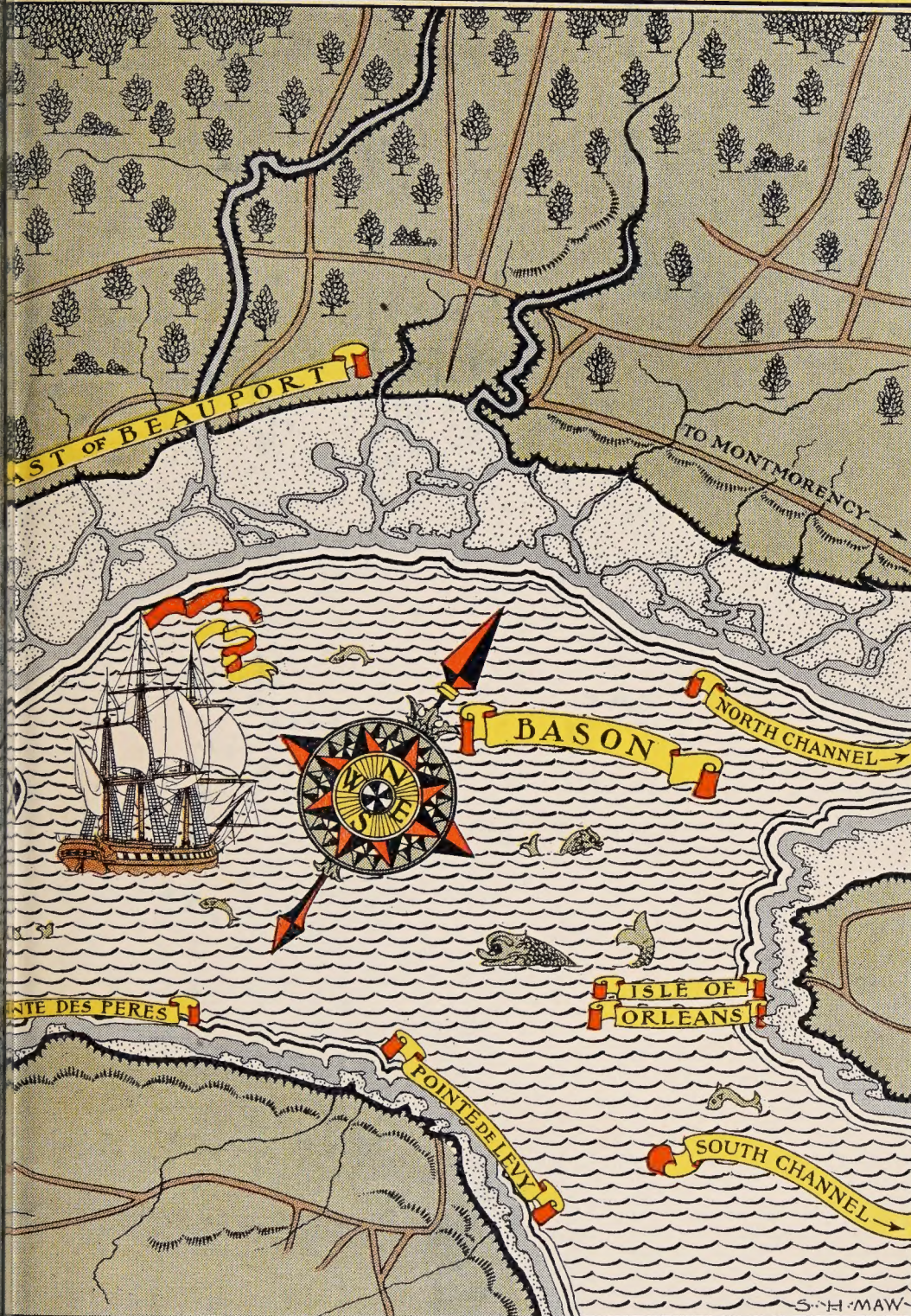


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JAMES WOLFE
MAN AND SOLDIER



I. MAJOR-GENERAL JAMES WOLFE

A portrait made at Quebec in 1759 by Brigadier-General the Hon. George Townshend. The original is in the McCord National Museum, McGill University.

JAMES WOLFE
MAN AND SOLDIER
BY W·T·WAUGH, M·A·
Kingsford Professor of History, McGill University



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THIS book first appears in two editions. One of these editions is limited to seven hundred and fifty copies, numbered from 1 to 750. For the larger edition several of the Townshend drawings have been slightly altered, the original wording in Townshend's handwriting, usually in French, being of the crude and racy flavour of war-time military camps and of eighteenth century masculine humour. In the Extra Illustrated Edition these drawings appear unaltered, as do also three additional Townshend drawings one of which, "The Irish Venus mourning General Wolfe," presents a tantalizing problem to the historical student fond of investigating the minutiae of history.

Many of the illustrations have never before been published in any form. Among these are most of the Townshend drawings. The two caricatures owned by Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor have appeared in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society of Canada, illustrating a paper by Dr. J. Clarence Webster. The Townshend portrait of Wolfe has also appeared, in black and white. The Publishers regret that the ordinary mechanical methods of reproduction made it impossible to reproduce the delicate colouring of this fine portrait.

The Publishers desire to express their gratefulness to those who courteously assisted in obtaining material for illustration: General Sir Arthur Currie and the Committee of the McCord National Museum; Dr. J. Clarence Webster, F.R.S.C., the noted authority on Wolfe portraiture, and Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor; Dr. A. G. Doughty and Dr. G. W. Parmelee, authors of *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham*,

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Senator J. S. McLennan, author of *Louisbourg from Its Foundation to Its Fall, 1713-1758*; Sir Leicester Harmsworth, owner of the Holland map of Louisbourg; Colonel Harold Wylly, editor of the Sherwood Foresters' Annual; Mr. Paul Gouin; Miss Mary Dudley Muir, assistant curator of the McCord National Museum; and the Robert Fridenberg Galleries, New York.

L. C.

To

A. E. G. W.

H. W.

J. C. F.

T. H. M.

AND

R. T.

WHO

AT GUYSBOROUGH, NOVA SCOTIA,

IN THE SUMMER OF 1927,

AIDED AND ABETTED

THE WRITING OF THIS BOOK.

PREFACE

IT HAS recently been stated, on high authority, that "there is scarcely a place for another life" of Wolfe; and I am fully aware of my rashness in writing this book. But, if we except Mrs. Wolfe-Aylward's *Pictorial Life of James Wolfe*, which did not claim to be more than a commentary on its admirable illustrations, no biography of Wolfe has appeared for eighteen years. Meanwhile, newly-discovered evidence of great interest has shed fresh light on his character and exploits, and has been summarised and discussed in scattered articles or in books which are primarily concerned with other subjects. It seemed to me therefore that I was warranted in making an attempt to set down what scholarship now permits us to say and think about him.

The book is meant for the general reader. It does not pretend to be a work of original research. I have seldom thought it necessary to cross-examine witnesses whose evidence has been exhaustively scrutinised by such scholars as Dr. A. G. Doughty, Colonel William Wood, and their fellows. But I have given careful attention to primary sources which were not known to Wolfe's previous biographers, and on controversial topics I have always tried, when considering questions of fact, to base my conclusion entirely on original authorities.

Needless to say, this sketch of Wolfe's life, slight as it is, could never have been written without much help. My first thanks are due to my wife for her indispensable advice and assistance. It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to my friend and colleague Professor T. H. Matthews, who for my sake nearly lost his motor-car in a bog at Louisbourg, to mention only one of his many kindly acts. Like everyone who has busied himself with the career of Wolfe, I am under many obligations to Colo-

P R E F A C E

nel William Wood, of Quebec. His writings have been of inestimable service, and he has grudged neither time nor effort in his willingness to place at my command his unsurpassed knowledge of the topography of Quebec and its neighbourhood. Dr. J. Clarence Webster, of Shediac, New Brunswick, has been no less helpful, furnishing new and valuable information, besides permitting the reproduction of Holland's map of Louisbourg and some of the most interesting pictures in his admirable collection. I am grateful also to Senator J. S. McLennan for allowing me to use the two little views of Louisbourg, to Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor for sanctioning the reproduction of two of Townshend's caricatures, and to Dr. W. D. Lighthall for welcome aid and counsel. The Committee of the McCord National Museum at McGill University have granted my every request, and to their liberality the book owes several of its illustrations. If I have reserved to the end an acknowledgment of my debt to the Public Archives of Canada at Ottawa, it is not because that debt is light. Dr. A. G. Doughty, the Dominion Archivist, and Dr. J. F. Kenney, the Director of Historical Research and Publicity, have been ready, indeed eager, to help me by every means in their power; and from many members of their staff, some of whom are not even known to me by name, I have received most valuable assistance. The spirit shown at the Ottawa Archives towards those engaged in historical research might be imitated with advantage at certain similar institutions.

I should add that, except when there was special reason to the contrary, I have modernized the spelling and punctuation of passages quoted from the writings of Wolfe and his contemporaries.

W. T. W.

McGill University,
Montreal.
April 27, 1928.

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DECORATIONS

Cover design by Thoreau MacDonald

End leaves by S. H. Maw; with ships by J. M. Meekison

Title page by Thoreau MacDonald

JAMES WOLFE
MAN AND SOLDIER

LIFE OF JAMES WOLFE

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD, 1727-1741

NEAR the western border of the English county of Kent there lies the little town of Westerham. Even now, when it can be reached from London by a twenty-mile ride in a motor-bus, it is a place of singular charm, very little defaced by the speculative builder or the tourist. Situated as it is in a well-wooded valley commanded by steep hills, it has not much room for expansion sideways, and thus consists mainly of a long winding street, which, whether you enter the town from the east or from the west, leads you uphill to the market-place. This is fronted by two inns of most attractive appearance and by several other houses that have evidently been there a long time; adjoining it on the east is what used to be the village-green — almost a curiosity nowadays — and just to the north of the green is the churchyard, where, for the sake of the view, the wise visitor will spend more time than in the church — a building deplorably over-restored and of no great artistic or architectural interest. Historically, however, it is of some account, for James Wolfe was baptized in it, and in its vicarage, on the far side of the green, he was born.

Very often a famous man's ancestors are remembered merely as ancestors. Wolfe's, however, are entitled to a little notice for their own sakes. In the middle ages the family, it seems, lived in South Wales, whence in the fifteenth century they emigrated to western Ireland. In the days of James I the Woulfes were

leading citizens of Limerick and some of them at least remained zealous Roman Catholics. Half a century later Captain George Woulfe, aided and inspired by his brother Francis, a Grey Friar, took the leading part in the defence of Limerick against the army of the English Commonwealth under Ireton. When the place surrendered Francis was executed; but George, though condemned to death, managed to elude punishment, settled in Yorkshire, changed his religion and the spelling of his name, married, and begat a son called Edward, with whom began the family's association with the British army.

Edward Wolfe suffered for being a Protestant, as his father had for being a Catholic, for when James II was king he was deprived of his commission in the army which had been raised in Ireland to support the king's religious and political designs. But he was more fortunate than his father in that he was able to retrieve his losses without changing his faith. When soon afterwards William of Orange ousted James, he was naturally inclined to favour the victims of his enemy; Edward Wolfe speedily received a captain's commission, which he seems to have retained for the rest of his undistinguished life. He had enough influence, however, to start at least two of his sons in his own tracks. The elder of these, who bore the same name as his father, became a second lieutenant of Marines in 1702, when only sixteen. The War of the Spanish Succession was just beginning; opportunities for winning promotion were numerous, and Edward Wolfe seems to have used them well. At all events, after doing good service in Flanders under Marlborough and in Scotland under Wade, he became a lieutenant-colonel in 1717, at what was considered a very youthful age for the attainment of such a rank. But that was his last upward step for many a year. Under the sound and unambitious control of the Whigs, among whom Sir Robert Walpole soon gained the ascendancy, the country enjoyed nearly twenty years of sorely-needed peace,

while Tory politicians and Whigs whom Walpole had pushed aside joined zealous and disappointed soldiers in denouncing the corruption and pusillanimity of the government.

Having for some years had no more exciting experience than road-making, Colonel Wolfe felt drawn towards marriage. Like the good Yorkshireman that he was he went to Yorkshire for a wife. From what we know of his temperament, he can hardly have been a passionate wooer; but his love, perhaps because it was placid, met with no obstacles, and in 1724 he married Henrietta, daughter of Edward Thompson, esquire, of Long Marston, a lady of good family, about twenty years old, and reputed to be beautiful. Her appearance was certainly striking and dignified, to judge from her portrait, and it must be remembered that standards of beauty change unaccountably from one generation to another. Her character, temper, and abilities will be to some extent revealed hereafter; but it may be recognised at once that she and the colonel, so far as one can tell, lived very happily together.

After some two years' residence in the town house of the Thompson family at York, Colonel Wolfe resolved to live in the south, where he would be nearer the source of patronage and promotion. What drew him to Westerham does not appear to be known, but in the summer of 1726 he and his wife arrived there and settled down as tenants of the house then known as Spiers. It stood at the extreme east end of the town, just where the main road forded a stream on its way to Sevenoaks and Maidstone. Even then it was a house of great historic interest. Its oldest parts were built in 1507, when Henry VII was king of England, Sebastian Cabot in the prime of life, and Jacques Cartier a youth. To-day, though it has been repeatedly enlarged, repaired, restored, and knocked about, it remains, with its gabled walls and mullioned windows, a most picturesque relic of Tudor and Stewart England. It has long been called Quebec House, in

commemoration of its having been the first home of James Wolfe.

That his birth, on January 2, 1727, took place at the vicarage, a few yards up the hill towards Westerham, was due to the fact that his mother was there on a visit, the colonel being from home on his military duties. But after three weeks, when James had been duly christened, Mrs. Wolfe went back to Spiers, where the boy lived till he was eleven. A year later Mrs. Wolfe had another son, who was named Edward; but after this there were no children.

The boys had a nurse, a young woman called Betty Hooper. James's affection for her, which lasted all his life, reminds one of the regard felt for "Cummy" by Robert Louis Stevenson, between whom and Wolfe there are many points of resemblance. Unlike Cummy, however, Betty Hooper married, and years afterwards her two sons became privates in the regiment of which Wolfe was lieutenant-colonel, and earned the high praise of their commander.

One cannot tell how far Betty helped to form James's character. Nor is it easy to judge what he owed to his parents. With his father he was generally on good terms. The colonel, who seems to have been fond of him, sympathetic with his ambitions, and actively solicitous for his welfare and success, was widely recognised as a most meritorious soldier — industrious, honest, and trustworthy. But, whatever his virtues, this portly comfortable gentleman could never be suspected of dash or brilliance, and it is certain that the qualities which gave most distinction to his son were not inherited from him. They cannot all be traced to James's parents or other ancestors; but his character unquestionably owed less to his father than to his mother. Like many Yorkshirewomen, she was of an energetic, not to say domineering, temperament; her ambition, which reappeared in James, was very tenacious; like him, she apparently had small

respect for rank or birth; her veneration for money, however, was great, but fortunately not transmitted to her sons. She was a capable and careful housekeeper, as she had need to be, for her husband was not rich; and she was a watchful and devoted mother to her two boys, both of whom gave constant anxiety to their parents by their bad health.

In looks and habit of body, indeed, James Wolfe showed no promise of becoming a military hero. He must have been a very ugly little boy. His flaming red hair did not go well with his blue eyes. His nose was tilted heavenward. His chin fell away as the chin of no man of action ought to do. He soon began to grow too fast, and throughout life he was very thin. His legs were much too long, his movements ungainly. From the earliest years he suffered from a delicate chest and other physical weaknesses. In those days, of course, the virtues of sunshine and fresh air were not understood, and an ailing child was kept indoors as much as possible and drenched with medicine. There still remains a book in which Mrs. Wolfe wrote down recipes for dishes and prescriptions for remedies, and, to judge from its contents, the ailments of her sons must have been far less unpleasant than her attempts to cure them. Here, for instance, is a sovereign medicine for affections of the chest: it has frequently been printed in writings about Wolfe, but is much too instructive to be omitted here.

Take a peck of green garden snails, wash them in beer, put them in an oven and let them stay till they're done crying; then with a knife and fork prick the green from them, and beat the snail shells and all in a stone mortar. Then take a quart of green earth-worms, slice them through the middle and strow them with salt: then wash them and beat them, the pot being first put into the still with two handfuls of angelica, a quart of rosemary flowers, then the snails and worms, the agrimony, bear's feet, red dock roots, barberry brake, bilberry, wormwood, of each two handfuls: one handful of rue, turmeric, and one ounce of saffron, well dried and beaten.

Then pour in three gallons of milk. Wait till morning, then put in three ounces of cloves (well beaten), hartshorn, grated. Keep the still covered all night. This done, stir it not. Distil with a moderate fire. The patient must take two spoonfuls at a time.

As James Wolfe was doubtless required to swallow gallons of this brew, his subsequent indifference to the risks and horrors of war needs no explanation.

Despite his mother's care, James grew up, and, for all his bodily weaknesses, he was from infancy of a high mettlesome spirit, resolved to be a soldier like his father. Nothing could subdue his delight in active play and outdoor exercise. Quebec House, with its dark passages, winding stairs, dim attics, secret chambers, and big garden was a splendid place for the games of adventurous make-believe which he played with his young brother or, more vigorously, with his bosom-friend George Warde, son of the owner of Squerryes Court, the great house which stood amid the magnificent trees of a spacious park, just beyond the western limits of the town.

It must be confessed, however, that extremely little is known of Wolfe's boyhood. Of his schooldays hardly anything can be learnt. He first went to a school in Westerham, kept by a Mr. Lawrence and attended by a few boys, sons of the local gentry. Nothing remains of the school house or furniture save the bell, and of Wolfe's studies and experiences there we are told nothing. When he was nearly twelve years old, his parents left Westerham and went to live at Greenwich.¹ One of the motives of the change was a desire to send the boys to a school which had lately been started by a clergyman called Samuel Swinden for the sons of officers in the army or navy. Mr. Swinden was not only a learned man and a capable teacher, but he was evidently a good judge of character and ability; for, though Edward

¹ They dwelt first in East Lane, now called East Street. From 1745 to 1752 they had a house in Church Fields.

Wolfe was much the quicker at his books, Swinden soon discerned in James the promise of high distinction; he gave the boy a great deal of attention, which, if it bore little fruit in his studies, laid the foundation of a friendship between the two which lasted throughout the grateful pupil's life. One of Swinden's assistants, an Oxford man called Weston, also won the respect and affection of the boy, who actually used to write to him in the holidays.

As Wolfe afterwards recognised, it would have been better for him had he stayed at Swinden's school until his boyhood was over. He never, indeed, disliked or despised learning, but his heart was set on soldiering, and the chance of seeing something of military life drove all other interests into oblivion. When he was twelve years old the long peace came to an end. The truth was that George II and many of his subjects wanted a war with someone; Walpole still favoured peace, but his influence was on the wane, and the best he could do was to choose Spain as the enemy, hoping that the British navy would satisfy public opinion by doing something spectacular in America and that military operations on the continent of Europe might be avoided. It was a foolish war, as it is easy to see now, and the blame for it rested in the main on Britain, which was seeking to punish Spain for trying to restrain British subjects from infringing a treaty between the two countries. But at the time it was popularly believed in England that the Spaniards had been treating harmless British sailors with great brutality, and the Wolfes doubtless shared the general conviction that it was a just and necessary war. Colonel Wolfe was eager for employment on active service; one reason for his move to Greenwich had been a desire to be nearer the fountain-head of commissions and appointments; and he was delighted when the cheap capture of Porto Bello by Admiral Vernon, instead of satisfying the nation's desire for glory, convinced it that the whole of Spain's colonial empire

might easily be conquered and so brought about his appointment as Adjutant-General of a great expedition which was to land ten thousand men on the Spanish Main, capture the important town of Cartagena, and thereafter perform whatever exploits might seem feasible. In those times an officer of high rank might be accompanied by volunteers who were treated as members of his private establishment. James was on fire to go in this capacity; his father, probably pleased at heart, soon began to yield to his pleas; and Mrs. Wolfe, for all her imperiousness, could not turn him from his purpose. So in July, 1740, father and son set out on the Portsmouth coach for the Isle of Wight, where the troops were in camp.

The ardour of the boy is best measured by his affection and respect for his mother, which were strong and genuine, and which (as we shall see) sometimes overcame his most passionately cherished desires. His feelings towards her are clearly shown in the following letter, the sincerity of which appears in every turn of phrase. It was written at Newport, Isle of Wight, on August 6, and is the earliest of the many extant letters from Wolfe to his mother.

I received my dearest Mamma's letter on Monday last, but could not answer it then, by reason I was at camp to see the regiments march off to go on board, and was too late for the post; but am very sorry, dear Mamma, that you doubt of my love, which I'm sure is as sincere as ever any son's was to his mother.

Papa and I are just going on board, but I believe shall not sail this fortnight; in which time, if I can get ashore at Portsmouth or any other town, I will certainly write to you, and when we are gone by every ship I meet, because I know it is my duty. Besides, if it was not I would do it out of love, with pleasure.

I am sorry to hear that your head is so bad, which, I fear, is caused by your being so melancholy; but pray, dear Mamma, if you love me, don't give yourself up to fears for us. . . . I hope, if it please God, we shall soon see one another, which will be the happiest day that

ever I shall see. I will, as sure as I live, if it is possible for me, let you know everything that has happened particular by every ship; therefore pray, dearest Mamma, don't doubt of it. I am in a very good state of health, and am likely to continue so. Pray my love to my brother, and accept of my duty. Papa desires his love to you and blessing to my brother. Pray my service to Mr. Streton and his family, to Mr. and Mrs. Weston, and to George Warde when you see him; and pray believe me to be, my dearest Mamma,

Your most dutiful, loving, and affectionate Son,

J. WOLFE.

P. S. — Harry gives his love to Margaret, and is very careful of me. Pray my service to Will and the rest. Papa bids me to tell you that Patterson will give Mr. Masterton two hundred pounds more.

To Mrs. Wolfe, at her House in Greenwich, Kent.

This is a highly characteristic letter, alike in its solicitous affection, its sanguine anticipations, and its thoughtful concern for friends. But the boy's spirits were soon brutally dashed. While on board waiting for the tardy departure of the fleet, he fell grievously ill. There was nothing for his father to do but to have him put ashore at Portsmouth, whence he was forthwith carried home. The expedition sailed without him, and he went back to school, where he was teased almost beyond endurance by the other boys. Anyone with the slightest recollection of himself at fourteen will be able to imagine something of Wolfe's feelings. One can hardly conceive a more bitter or more humiliating disappointment. Yet the infuriating friends who said that it was all for the best — and there always are such — were for once right. The expedition was grossly mismanaged, as joint military and naval enterprises generally have been. Not only did it quite fail of its purpose, but it cost many thousands of men their lives through disease. Life on board an eighteenth-century ship of war was hard enough even for good sailors in the pleasantest conditions; and to a helpless victim of sea-sickness, as it was Wolfe's later

lot to be, the manifold perils of the Cartagena expedition must have proved fatal. His father, though he survived, came home after two years with his health permanently impaired, and resolved never again to take part in amphibious operations. Doubtless the lessons of the Cartagena disaster had much to do with his son's later success in warfare of this very kind.

Though he worked at his books as well as ever, James's determination to enter the army was even stronger than before. His recent experience had revealed to him the handicap to which his physical deficiencies would subject him, and he sought to improve his prospects by a course of physical training. Meanwhile, family influence was being used for all it was worth, and numerous friends were importuned to do what they could to help. And so it came about that in December, 1741, when he was about to complete his fifteenth year, Wolfe received his first commission, which appointed him second lieutenant in the regiment of Marines of which his father was colonel. It arrived while he was on a holiday visit to Squerryes Court at Westerham, and the spot in the grounds where it was put into his hands was afterwards marked by an unshapely urn standing on an elaborate pedestal; the monument is not beautiful and the doggerel lines which it bears are not true. If the zeal shown in identifying and marking places associated with Wolfe had been devoted to the study of his character and achievements, he would be better known to us than any other man of his century.

CHAPTER II

ACTIVE SERVICE: FLANDERS AND GERMANY, 1742-1745

THE commission received by Wolfe in Squerreyes Park started him on his military career, which was to continue till his death. In the Marines, however, he never actually served, much to his father's disappointment. He was already known to be an exceptionally bad sailor, and Mrs. Wolfe was eager to save her son from a life which at best was notoriously hard and unhealthy. To James himself it was probably a more weighty consideration that the regiment he was to join was at the moment at the other side of the Atlantic. His friends, with long-suffering good-nature, resumed their efforts on his behalf, and he was permitted to exchange into the line, becoming, on March 27, 1742, an ensign in the Twelfth Regiment of Foot. In the meantime he had cheerfully gone back to school, where he had worked with special zeal at Latin and Mathematics, "in which latter branch," he confesses, "I am still very deficient." Wolfe's transfer to the infantry was doubtless facilitated by the fact that Great Britain was about to enter a new war. What Walpole had dreaded was coming to pass. He had managed to prevent the conflict with Spain from involving the country in large operations on land. But in 1740 a new source of trouble arose in Europe. The Holy Roman Emperor, Charles VI, died, leaving no son to succeed to his vast and heterogeneous territories. All the principal Powers of Europe, it is true, had pledged themselves to uphold the arrangement called the Pragmatic Sanction, whereby these lands were all to pass to his daughter Maria Theresa; but as soon as

Charles was in his grave she was set upon by several states, Prussia and France being the chief, all eager to take what they could get. Maria Theresa's subjects, especially the Hungarians, rallied to her support in a way that greatly astonished her enemies, but her brave resistance could not long withstand the odds against her; she had to leave her capital, Vienna, and take refuge in Hungary, while everywhere her lands were being invaded or threatened. In England these events created much excitement. The nation, chagrined at the ill-success of the operations at sea, was keen on restoring its self-respect by victories on land. Many held that it was a moral duty to uphold the Pragmatic Sanction against those who were violating it; to more it seemed an obligation of chivalry to go to the rescue of a distressed queen, who was moreover young and beautiful. Those who knew something of international politics and trade were alarmed at the possibility that the French would overrun the Austrian Netherlands, now called Belgium. King George, who was Elector of Hanover, feared an increase in the strength of Prussia. Walpole held that neither honour nor interest counselled intervention, and that was enough for all his rivals to find a hundred cogent reasons why Great Britain should intervene. In the end the advocates of an active policy prevailed. Beaten in the House of Commons in February, 1742, Walpole resigned; the new ministry, headed by Lord Carteret, was heartily supported by a new House when it proposed to send an army to the Netherlands to aid the Austrians in resisting the French. Thus, so far as Great Britain was concerned, began the War of the Austrian Succession. It was a singularly uninspiring and inconclusive conflict; but, whatever the motives of her statesmen, Great Britain undoubtedly went in on the side of justice and honesty.

Wolfe's regiment was among those chosen to go to the Netherlands. The force, 16,000 strong, was under the command of an aged officer, Lord Stair, whose reputation was eked out by his



II. QUEBEC HOUSE, WESTERHAM

promotion at this moment to the rank of field-marshal. His qualities were not likely to be neutralised by those of the generals under him. But the prospects of the expedition were believed to be excellent, and it was amid immense enthusiasm that the king reviewed the troops on Blackheath, where it was Wolfe's duty, as junior ensign, to carry the regimental colours. A few weeks later the troops embarked at Deptford. The wind failed as the fleet reached the mouth of the Thames, and the voyage to Ostend took several days. From Ostend the army marched through Bruges to Ghent, somewhat astonished at the evident dislike shown towards them by the inhabitants, who cared little whether they were ruled by Austrians or by Frenchmen, and wished only to live quietly, unmolested by soldiers of any kind.

At Ghent, where the troops were quartered on the citizens, this animosity soon bore fruit in an affray which began by a quarrel between a soldier and a butcher and led to the deaths of many on both sides. After this, however, the municipal authorities issued a drastic decree which deterred the townsfolk from displaying their feelings towards the army, and before long the life of the British became merely boring. Months passed and Lord Stair did nothing. Wolfe soon began to realise that the greater part of a soldier's service consists in standing and waiting. At first he amused himself by sight-seeing in the city and by observing the manners and customs of the people; and he made one or two acquaintances among the civilians. But he did not find his fellow-officers very congenial, and after two or three months he felt so dull that he took lessons on the flute. Towards the end of the summer, however, his friend George Warde, now an officer in the Horse Guards, arrived in Ghent; about the same time the opera house re-opened; and by the middle of September Wolfe was in high spirits, writing to his mother that he was getting excellent food, that rum and brandy were good and cheap (not that he cared much for them), that he went to the play once or twice a

week, and talked a little with the ladies, "who are very civil, and speak French." In those days it was a matter of course that fighting should be suspended during winter, so no one expected Marshal Stair to do anything for months after Wolfe wrote this letter. Indeed, it caused some surprise when the army was ordered to march in the following February. But it was thought well to make an early start, for the troops had an arduous march before them, seeing that it had been decided to transfer them to central Germany, which was expected to be the field of the most important fighting during the next summer.

Wolfe had learned something of the stupidity of war; he was soon to experience some of its hardships. They were rendered no easier to bear by the presence of his brother Edward, now a fellow-officer, who was even less fitted than he for the rigours to which they were subjected. On February 12, writing to his mother from St. Trond, near Liège, he says:

This is our fifth day's march; we have had very bad weather all the way. I have found out by experience that my strength is not so great as I imagined; but, however, I have held out pretty well as yet. To-morrow is a very bad road to Tongres, so if I can I will hire a horse at this place, and march afoot one day and ride the other, all the rest of the journey.

I never come into quarters without aching hips and knees; and I assure you the wisest part of the officers got horses at Ghent, though some would have done it if their circumstances would have allowed it.

We have lived pretty well all the way, but I have already been glad to take a little water out of a soldier's flask, and eat some ammunition bread. I am now quartered at the head man of the town's house, one of the civilest men I ever met in my life. The people where I was billeted refused to let me in, so I went to the townhouse and complained, and this gentleman took me and another officer that was with me to his house. . . .

I shall write to my father when we get to the end of our march; I'm glad to hear, with all my heart, that he's well. I'm in the great-

est spirits in the world; I have my health pretty well, and I believe I shall be very well able to hold it out with a little help of a horse. Pray be so good as to give my duty to my father. This is the best paper St. Tron affords; I have got a serjeant's pen and ink, which are commonly very bad; so I hope you'll excuse everything that is bad in this letter.

I am, dear Madam,

Your dutiful and affectionate Son,

J. WOLFE.

Wolfe wrote few letters like this. It was not usual for him to admit in his letters home that there was much the matter with him. But, though he was plainly feeling very ill, his buoyant spirits got the better of his depression, as they must have done time and again during the next two months. For on April 7, the army was no farther than the neighbourhood of Bonn, and Edward Wolfe, writing to his father, speaks of marching up to his knees in snow on the previous Monday, complains that he has no bedding and can buy none in Bonn, bewails the monotony of the food, nothing being procurable but eggs, bacon, and sour bread, and describes the inhabitants of the region as very malicious besides being very poor, while crediting most of them with an ability to speak Latin, an assertion which makes one a little sceptical about the rest of the letter. There is no doubt, however, that the two brothers suffered much, notwithstanding the horse which for some time they had shared; for Edward, though less sanguine in temperament than James, was not a boy to cry out unless he was really hurt. Four weeks later the force had reached Frankfurt, and Edward, who had managed to buy some bedding, wrote that the town resembled London, and, after speaking confidently of beating the French, who were supposed to be near at hand, declared that he was keeping well and living merrily.

Edward Wolfe's expectation of a battle was not realised for some time, though movements which resulted in one were already in progress. The British were threatened by a superior

French force, which was advancing northward against them under Marshal Noailles, a strategist of some ability. In the next weeks he completely out-manœuvred poor Lord Stair, and by the middle of June he had the British almost surrounded in the valley of the Main, about twenty miles east of Frankfort, cut off from their reinforcements and in great straits for food and forage. James Wolfe had just been appointed acting-adjutant of his regiment, an arduous and responsible position for a boy of sixteen. That he was selected for it is striking testimony both to the promise that he had shown and to the incompetence of his senior officers. Wolfe admitted to his father that he had been afraid lest the fatigue of his duties should be too much for him, but, writing on June 21, he said that he had become used to it and thought that it would agree with him. At the moment, however, it looked as if he would soon exchange the worries of an adjutant for the dejection of a prisoner. It is true that the arrival of King George and his son, the Duke of Cumberland, had slightly improved the prospects of the British, for the duke knew something of generalship and both were energetic and enthusiastic. Still, the position was so perilous that there was nothing for it but retreat. The intelligence service of the French, however, was as good as that of the British was bad; Noailles was kept thoroughly informed of his enemies' plans; and when the withdrawal began the British and their allies found their road blocked near the village of Dettingen by 30,000 Frenchmen under the Duc de Gramont, whom Noailles had detached from his main force on the other side of the river. The British were already exposed to a destructive flanking fire from Noailles' artillery, and the whole army, from the king downwards, would probably have been forced to surrender had not the impetuous Gramont left the strong position he had been instructed to hold and advanced to meet his foes on open and level ground. King George, brandishing his sword, cheered on his men, first on horseback and then

on foot; and the armies drew together for Wolfe's first battle.

In eighteenth-century warfare battles were comparatively rare. Active campaigning was limited to about six months of the year. Most armies consisted of professional soldiers, whom it took time and money to replace. Commanders thus sought to attain their objectives by skilful manœuvres rather than by bloodshed, and as in most parts of Europe the roads were such that transport was slow without being sure, their military operations were as a rule dignified and leisurely. Now and then, however, when a general considered his position to be particularly advantageous or particularly desperate, a battle took place. It was usually exciting while it lasted, but soon over. The issue was most frequently decided by cold steel, whether the infantryman's bayonet or the cavalryman's sabre. The musket in general use, known to the British soldier as Brown Bess, was a smooth-bore, muzzle-loading flint-lock. In the hands of a skilled man, it would fire three shots a minute, and before the close of Wolfe's career, owing to the introduction of the iron ramrod, it could discharge five. Its extreme range was about three hundred yards, but it was hard to use it effectively at more than a hundred, for its leaden bullet, over an ounce in weight, was appreciably smaller than its bore, and its flight was thus only approximately calculable. Rifled small-arms were known, and many officers carried rifled pistols of admirable workmanship; but since the rifling was done by hand, it was impossible to supply such weapons to large bodies of men. Artillery was more highly developed than small-arms, as it generally had been since the invention of gunpowder; at sea or sieges it was very formidable, but field-guns were still cumbrous, and though the heaviest in common use, a twelve-pounder, would carry a mile, its average rate of fire was considerably less than two rounds a minute. In open warfare, artillery, though when advantageously posted it

might be very harassing, seldom decided the issue of an action. Some armies trusted mainly to their cavalry, and of course a successful cavalry charge might win a battle in a few minutes. But before well-drilled infantry, whose ranks remained unbroken, cavalry were impotent; and in the last resort victory went to the side whose foot had been most efficiently trained on the parade ground. For the movements and evolutions which the men had to do there were precisely the same as those required on the field of battle. Drawn up shoulder to shoulder in a three-deep line, they were led to within effective range of the enemy. Then they fired a volley, and immediately reloaded, an operation which had to be carried out with the utmost precision. If their general had ordered an attack, they would advance at a slow march for a few yards, fire again, and again pause to reload. As soon as there were signs of disorder in the opposing line, a bayonet charge would be ordered; perhaps both sides would charge, and then the one whose ranks were the more intact would probably drive the other off the field. If one side remained throughout on the defensive, it would be at a disadvantage when the charge came, but on the other hand would most likely fire more coolly and effectively while its enemy was approaching. Thus, an officer who had given much attention to the musketry-drill of his troops would prefer to stand fast and await attack.

Under the conditions just described casualties would be heavy for a short while, but in proportion to the number of troops engaged would be much fewer than in a battle of our own time. One may well believe that to a brave man an eighteenth-century battle, while it lasted, would be a rather exhilarating experience. To a spectator it must have been a gay spectacle, provided one was not near enough to see the details of what was happening. At Dettingen the French troops engaged were in white uniforms; most of the British of course had red coats, and there were pres-

ent numbers of German and Hungarian horsemen clad in various arrangements of red, blue, green and black.

The battle, it must be confessed, was ill conducted on both sides. The French began by a cavalry charge of the famous corps known as the Mousquetaires Gris. They shattered the part of the front line which was held by the Scots Fusiliers, but their losses were so terrible that the second line had no difficulty in repulsing them and of those who had broken through only about twenty returned to their own army. So Wolfe told his father, adding that "nothing could be more rash than their undertaking." "The second attack," he goes on, "was made on the left by their Horse against ours, who advanced for the first time, and on neither side did much, for they both retreated, and our Horse had like to have broke our first line in the confusion. The Horse fired their pistols, which, if they had let alone, and attacked the French with their swords, being so much stronger and heavier, they would certainly have beat them. Their excuse for retreating — they could not make their horses stand the fire." Then the infantry advanced against each other; and in view of later events, Wolfe's description of what ensued is of singular interest.

The Major and I (for we had neither Colonel nor Lieutenant-Colonel), before they came near, were employed in begging and ordering the men not to fire at too great a distance, but to keep it till the enemy should come near us; but to little purpose. The whole fired when they thought they could reach them, which had like to have ruined us. We did very little execution with it. So soon as the French saw we presented they all fell down, and when we had fired they got up, and marched close to us in tolerable good order, and gave us a brisk fire, which put us into some disorder and made us give way a little, particularly ours and two or three more regiments, who were in the hottest of it. However, we soon rallied again, and attacked them with great fury, which gained us a complete victory, and forced the enemy to retire in great haste.

Wolfe speaks highly of the courage shown by the King and the Duke of Cumberland; but the former threw away many of the fruits of victory by halting as soon as the French were in retreat, and holding an impromptu court to receive congratulations from his generals and the members, male and female, of his suite. Meanwhile, the French, most of whom might have been cut off, were able to recross the river and rejoin Marshal Noailles. Wolfe spoke bitterly of this failure to press home the success that had been attained, and it is probable that his thoughts dwelt on it in the very last moment of his life. The effect of the battle was nevertheless considerable. The allies were able to carry out their projected retreat; and before Marshal Noailles could reorganise his shaken troops, an Austrian advance drove him out of Germany. The French campaign was a total failure.

Though Wolfe says little of his own share in the conflict, it is plain that he was in the very thick of the fighting. Nevertheless, he kept a watchful eye upon all that was happening, and his criticisms are very frank and shrewd. It is astonishing to find a lad of sixteen acting as second in command of a regiment in his first battle. Evidently, however, he proved himself fully equal to the demands made upon him. His conduct had attracted the favourable notice of the Duke of Cumberland, and before the end of July he was not only acting as adjutant but had been formally appointed to that position by the King, while he had furthermore been promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

It was some time before he had another opportunity of distinguishing himself. An invasion of France might have been attempted with some chance of success, and even the unenterprising Stair is said to have advocated it. But the King was content to advance to Worms, on the west bank of the Rhine, where the army remained encamped for some weeks, uncertain whether they were to advance or be attacked. In the event, nothing happened. Early in the autumn Lord Stair resigned his command;

and his deficiencies were soon eclipsed by those of his successor, Marshal Wade. The King went back to the plaudits of his subjects, and the British troops to Flanders. Of Wolfe's experiences on the march nothing seems to be known. His regiment reached Brussels towards the end of November and then went into winter quarters at Ostend. Edward Wolfe, who had shown great courage at Dettingen, was in bad health, and was granted long leave in England, but James was indispensable. He remained at Ostend all winter, and though life must have been monotonous, spring found him in very good spirits, writing chaffingly to his brother about girls they both admired and sending thanks to his mother for a plum cake, "which was very good and of singular service to me." It is well to be reminded that this successful and serious warrior was still a boy in years and tastes.

At the beginning of the next campaign, James received his commission as captain and was transferred to another regiment, the Fourth Foot, commanded by Colonel Barrell. About the same time, Edward, who remained with the Twelfth, became a lieutenant; he ascribed his promotion to the influence of his father, who was now a brigadier and, having done good service on the Cartagena expedition, was better able than previously to advance the interests of himself and his sons. During the summer of 1744 the greater part of the British force helped to form a numerous but heterogeneous army, numbering in all about 65,000 men, which sat still while the French pressed far into the Netherlands, taking several important places, among them Ypres. The English reader of to-day may readily share the indignation which the fall of that town caused in the army. Writing to his father on June 17, Edward Wolfe plainly betrays his chagrin, though he makes the best of things by adding that "the taking of the town is no great feat, if we consider the strength of the garrison, which was said to be but four weak battalions." Nothing, however, could move Wade. His inertia, indeed, was

such that he could not be prevailed upon to retreat until he found himself deserted by the commanders of the Austrian and Dutch contingents in the army. Then he withdrew to Ghent, where Wolfe was destined to pass another winter.

Meanwhile his brother Edward's weakly body had succumbed to the continuous strain imposed upon it by army life. In the early autumn he fell sick, and his ailment soon revealed itself as virulent consumption. As the two brothers were no longer in the same regiment, James was not with him at the end and evidently had not realised that his case was so serious. A letter which he wrote to his mother soon afterwards is particularly illuminating, and most of it will bear quotation.

Poor Ned wanted nothing but the satisfaction of seeing his dearest friends to leave the world with the greatest tranquillity. He often called on us. It gives me many uneasy hours when I reflect on the possibility there was of my being with him some time before he died. God knows it was being too exact, and not apprehending the danger the poor fellow was in; and even that would not have hindered it had I received the physician's first letter. I know you won't be able to read this paragraph without shedding tears, as I do writing it; but there is a satisfaction even in giving way to grief now and then. 'Tis what we owe the memory of a dear friend.

Though it is the custom of the army to sell the deceased's effects, I could not suffer it. We none of us want, and I thought the best way would be to bestow them on the deserving who [*sic*] he had an esteem for in his lifetime. His servant — the most honest and faithful man I ever knew — I gave all his clothes. . . . I gave his horse to his friend Parry, with the furniture. I know he loved Parry, and I know for that reason the horse will be taken care of. . . . His other horse I keep myself. I have his watch, sword, sash, gorget, books, and maps, which I shall preserve to his memory. Everything else that I have not mentioned shall be taken care of, or given to proper people.

He was an honest and a good lad, had lived very well, and always discharged his duty with the cheerfulness becoming a good officer. He lived and died as a son of you two should, which, I think, is say-

ing all I can. I have the melancholy satisfaction to find him regretted by his friends and acquaintance. His Colonel is particularly concerned for him, and desired I would assure you of it. There was in him the prospect (when ripened with experience) of great understanding and judgment, and an excellent soldier. You'll excuse my dwelling so long on this cruel subject, but in relating this to you, vanity and partiality are banished. A strong desire to do justice to his memory occasions it.

There is no part of his life that makes him dearer to me than that where [*sic*] you have often mentioned — *he pined after me*. It often makes me angry that any hour of my life should pass without thinking of him; and when I do think of him, that though all the reasons I have to lament his loss are now as forcible as at the moment of his departure, I don't find my heart swell with the same sorrow as it did at that time. Nature is ever too good in blotting out the violence of afflictions. For with tempers (as mine is) too much given to mirth, it is often necessary to revive grief in one's memory. I must once more beg you will excuse my tiresome length and manner of writing, but I know your indulgence. I'm just now going to write to my Uncle Wolfe.

I am, dearest Madam,

Your dutiful and affectionate Son,

J. WOLFE.

This letter might well lead the modern reader to pronounce Wolfe a pompous prig. And it must be confessed that parts, particularly the last paragraph, ring false. At the same time, much of it is evidently infused with genuine and deep emotion. Especially moving is the second paragraph quoted above. The praise of Edward's servant and the concern for Edward's horse are highly characteristic. Moreover, the less pleasing features of the letter may be greatly extenuated. Letters of condolence, as most people know, are hard to write, exceptionally so for a boy of seventeen. One must remember, too, that Wolfe's schooling had been short. That his grammar and syntax were shaky is betrayed by this very letter. Now an imperfectly educated person always finds it difficult to express strong emotion in writing,


and habitually has recourse to formulas and copy-book platitudes. The eighteenth century, moreover, was a ceremonious age; relations between children and their parents were adapted to the formalism that prevailed. Thus, in his letters home, Wolfe always addresses his father as "Dear Sir," and his mother as "Dear Madam": he will send his "duty" to his mother, and his letters to her often end, "I am, My dear Madam, etc., J. Wolfe": writing to his best friend he may sign himself "Your faithful and affectionate servant." In those days, furthermore, letter-writing was a solemn affair, not to be taken in hand inadvisedly or lightly; you were expected to use your best literary style and to give your reader something to think about; a colloquial note, with a few items of commonplace news, would have been regarded as discourteous. If these considerations be borne in mind, the sentiments and tone of Wolfe's letter become comparatively inoffensive. Nevertheless it betrays a characteristic which one will admire or condemn according to one's own temperament. In Wolfe's affections his profession came first. No doubt his failure to visit his dying brother was due in part to ignorance of the nature of his illness, but, as he admits, punctilious exactness in the discharge of his regimental duties was a contributory cause; he implies that he could have got leave to go, and many a man, at the mere news that his brother was really ill, would have gone. Furthermore, on hearing of Edward's death, Mrs. Wolfe was naturally anxious to see James. She begged him to try to arrange a visit to England, but, though he said that he would be "sincerely happy" to do so and wrote to his father with the object of securing the removal of "some obstacles," he devoted only a couple of sentences of this letter to the proposal and clearly was but little interested in it. Wolfe was a good son, fond of his parents, ready to defer to their wishes in many vital matters; but his affection towards them was never allowed to stand in the way of his military advancement. So all

through the winter he stayed at Ghent, confirming the good opinion which his superiors had formed of him, and paving the way for further promotion.

Before the next campaign began, Marshal Wade had been superseded by the Duke of Cumberland. The Duke has left a reputation for cruelty and incompetence, but he was a great improvement on his predecessor. Wade had one foot in the grave and his nerve could not be trusted. The new commander was twenty-three years old and of proved courage. He was also of a vigorous disposition, and he understood his job much better than most of the British generals of the time. Shortly after his arrival an attempt to relieve Tournay, besieged by the great Marshal Saxe, led to the battle of Fontenoy. The British were defeated, but only after the infantry had made a magnificent advance which very nearly turned the day in their favour. Their losses were heavy, and Wolfe's old regiment, the Twelfth, was very badly cut up. He himself missed the battle, the Fourth being still at Ghent, but immediately afterwards it was ordered to reinforce the Duke, who a week or two later gave testimony of his continued regard for the young captain by appointing him brigade-major. Wolfe's luck was in at this time. For on June 30 the French surprised Ghent, and the garrison surrendered after a feeble pretence of resistance. To have been involved in such an affair could have done no good to his reputation. And since there seemed little prospect of any successful counter-stroke by the British, it was probably well for Wolfe that at this juncture he was given a new field for showing his ability.

CHAPTER III

THE "FORTY-FIVE" AND PEACE, 1745-1748

N JULY 25 Charles Edward Stewart, called by his enemies the Young Pretender, landed with a few followers in the Highlands of Scotland. Less than two months later he was playing the prince in Holyrood Palace. Threatened by a British force advancing from the south, he marched out and routed it ignominiously at Preston Pans. King George's ministers were much alarmed, and summoned seven regiments from Flanders. One of them was Wolfe's. He had been away from England for more than three years.

Wolfe, however, had no time to enjoy himself at home. His regiment was at once ordered to Newcastle-on-Tyne. There, as fate would have it, he found himself again under the command of Marshal Wade, whose incompetence seemed indispensable to whatever ministry was in office. As compensation, he had an opportunity of meeting his father, from whom he had parted in such distressing circumstances at Portsmouth five years before; he was now sixty, and the Cartagena catastrophe had done no good to his health, but as he was general of a division, he was able to travel in a post-chaise without loss of prestige. As for Wade, his strategy was in his best manner. For some weeks he displayed a masterly inertia. In face of this the Pretender invaded England by the west-coast route, and laid siege to Carlisle. This move suggested to Wade the desirability of marching in the enemy's direction, and on November 16 he ordered his troops to begin the sixty mile march to Carlisle. The road leads through hilly and wild country; winter had set in early, and there was much snow on the ground. The army painfully covered some

twenty miles in two days, and many in its ranks must have been secretly relieved when news came that Carlisle had fallen; for, as might have been expected, Wade forthwith returned to Newcastle. Charles Edward continued his southward march, and though few Englishmen joined him, his advance threw London into a panic. Meanwhile Wade too had set his face southwards and was retreating against his enemy through Yorkshire.

While all these things were happening, more men had been brought home from Flanders, and, with these and others, a second army was formed and sent under the Duke of Cumberland to block the Pretender's path in the midlands. Cumberland was a formidable opponent, and if Wade had been someone else, his presence threatening the flank and rear of the invaders would have made their position really precarious. As it was their nerve failed them, and at Derby, on the advice of his principal officers, the Prince reluctantly and perhaps unwisely turned back. Cumberland followed hard after him, but could not catch him up; and after a successful rearguard skirmish near Penrith the Highlanders crossed the Border safely.

Wade's army now came to the fore again. When Charles Edward began to retreat, it received instructions to march northward along the route by which it had come, and, entering Scotland at Berwick, to cut off the Pretender from Edinburgh. As things fell out, it could not accomplish this part of its purpose, for the Prince did not try to reach Edinburgh, marching by Glasgow to Stirling, which he besieged. The British force, however, had advanced so quickly that the commander of Stirling castle had good ground for expecting speedy relief. The sudden acceleration of the movements of Wade's army has the simple explanation that it was no longer commanded by Wade. He had been superseded by General Hawley, whose abilities were hardly greater, but whose energy was considerable. He was, however, a most unpleasant person. He was commonly called

the "Hangman," and was believed to have brought several professional executioners to Scotland with him. His men justly hated him.

On reaching Edinburgh the new general promptly pushed on towards Stirling. At Falkirk, rather more than half way, he halted. Prince Charlie's troops, numbering, like his own, about nine thousand men, were waiting for him near Stirling, but he did not believe that they would offer serious resistance and it never crossed his mind that they might attack. But attack they did, and took the English completely by surprise. The men, in fact, were having a meal, and their general was some miles off, dining with the Countess of Kilmarnock. The second-in-command lost his head, and confusion reigned until Hawley reappeared, breathless and profane. By that time the Highlanders had seized the high ground of Falkirk Moor, from which the English tried to dislodge them in the teeth of heavy winter rain. The behaviour of the Highlanders could hardly have been bettered. They beat off a charge of horse, and repulsed three regiments of English foot. Then, dropping their muskets after their custom, they dashed forward with the claymore, and broke Hawley's centre. Only on the right, where Wolfe was stationed, did the English stand firm, and when the troops on that wing had to fall back in order to keep their alignment with the rest of the force, they retired in perfect order, with drums beating and colours flying, making so gallant a show that the victors shrank from pressing the pursuit. But Hawley retreated to Edinburgh, abandoning his guns, which had stuck in a swamp; and though Wolfe, in a letter to a friend, rather disingenuously tried to represent the battle as a trivial affair, in which the English had the better of the actual fighting, there is no doubt that they were discredibly beaten. The fight did not, however, improve the prospects of the Pretender, for the Highlanders got so much loot that many of them considered that their military objective had

been attained, and so went home. What was perhaps more serious from the Prince's standpoint, the government in London took a grave view of the reverse, and instructed the Duke of Cumberland to conduct the Scottish campaign in person. Less than a month after the battle of Falkirk, he was at Edinburgh. On the day after his arrival, the army once more advanced.

Meanwhile, Prince Charlie had remained before Stirling castle, which had held out, never being seriously pressed. His Highlanders continued to disappear, and there was bitter strife among his officers. He made no attempt to repeat his former exploit, but while the Duke was still a long way off, beat a precipitate retreat, which was not arrested till he reached Inverness. Cumberland followed more slowly, rounding up the notoriously disaffected and receiving protestations of loyalty from those who had not been found out. At the end of February he reached Aberdeen. Here he stayed for some weeks, reducing to obedience the surrounding country, which had contributed many men to the Prince's army. Cumberland, a strict disciplinarian, made his men work hard and generally kept them well in hand; but in the task on which he was engaged rough and harsh deeds were inevitable, and naturally the victims denounced him as a brutal oppressor. By this time Wolfe had been appointed aide-de-camp to Hawley, on the recommendation of the Duke himself, who doubtless thought that he was doing a good turn to a meritorious young officer. We may well believe, however, that the position was far from being congenial to Wolfe. A famous story gives an idea of the duties that were thrust upon him. It is told by a certain Mrs. Gordon, a well-known sympathiser with Prince Charles. Her house was allotted to General Hawley as his quarters. She naturally betook herself elsewhere; but next day she was visited by " one Major Wolfe," who informed her that by the Duke's orders she was to forfeit all her property except the clothes on her back. He added, however, that General Hawley,

having heard favourable accounts of her, would ask the Duke to allow her to keep any particular thing she might name, provided that she would give her word that it really belonged to her. She suggested her tea — tea being a highly prized luxury in eighteenth-century Scotland; but the major said that it was very good, and that, tea being scarce in the army, he thought it unlikely that she would be allowed to have it. A request for her chocolate met with a similar reply. “I mentioned several other things,” she continues, “particularly my china. That he told me was, *a great deal of it*, very pretty, and that they were very fond of china themselves; but as they had no ladies travelled with them, I might perhaps have *some of it*. I then desired to have my pictures. He said he supposed I could not wish to have *them all*. I replied that I did not pretend to name any, except my son’s. He asked me if I had a son, where was he? I said I had sent him into the country to make room for them. To what place? said he. I answered, to Sir Arthur Forbes’s. He asked, how old my son was. I said, about fourteen. Said he, then he is not a child, and you will have to produce him; and thus we parted.” Next day, she proceeds, Wolfe came again and told her that the Duke, having read a petition she had drawn up, had decided that everything should be restored to her. Nevertheless, whenever she sent to her house for anything in particular, as “a pair of breeches for my son, a little tea for myself, for a bottle of ale, for some flour to make bread,” her request was always refused. Wolfe, she says, brought the picture of her son, but without the frame — “a gilt one and very handsome” — explaining that Hawley had kept it. The general, whatever his motive, did not want the frame for himself, and Mrs. Gordon found it in her house after he left.

Much ink has been shed over this episode. Wolfe has been denounced by some as a mean-spirited bully, while others — in-

cluding his principal biographer — have urged that his behaviour was not merely pardonable but praiseworthy. For his actions he certainly should not be blamed, for he was carrying out orders. Perhaps his manner was needlessly irritating. It is, however, likely that the lady's report of her conversations with Wolfe is coloured so as to give a disagreeable impression of him; in fact, the simple removal of the italics would in itself alter the whole effect of the passages which they decorate. And even if Wolfe said everything attributed to him, and said it as unpleasantly as Mrs. Gordon implies, there is little ground for indignation or surprise. Mrs. Gordon was known to be in sympathy with the Stewart cause, even though no overt act of rebellion could be proved against her. An inventory which she herself made showed that there were in her possession vast quantities of provisions and household goods, some of which, on her own written admission, did not belong to her. It was natural to suspect that she was keeping property of proscribed rebels to save it from confiscation. It is not surprising if Wolfe's courtesy was a little ironical. For he was very far from being a Sunday-school hero; and the writers who have sought to palliate his every fault give a wholly false idea of the real man. His later record shows that he was generosity itself when dealing with a former enemy. But there was no make-believe in his attitude towards war. He fought fair, according to the rules of the time, but he would not help the enemy by forgoing any advantage to which he was entitled or neglecting any means which he might legitimately employ. Mrs. Gordon was a presumptive rebel against the authority whose commission he held. He would treat her with conventional politeness, as she does not deny that he did; but she must understand that he and his superiors were not to be trifled with. Wolfe was a clear thinker. To him a movement regarded as a rebellion was something to be suppressed, and hav-

ing willed the end he willed the means. It had been better for Britain if more of her soldiers and politicians, alike in Wolfe's age and our own, had possessed his sense of the obvious.

At the beginning of April, Cumberland decided that Aberdeen had been sufficiently chastened, and the army set out westward, marching as near the coast as they could, so as to keep in touch with a naval force that had been sent to support them. At Nairn, where the Duke's birthday was commemorated by the issue of a special ration of brandy, cheese, and biscuit, the enemy reasonably attempted a surprise, but owing to some miscalculation missed the opportune moment and retreated in dejection. Resuming their advance next day, April 16, the English soon descried the Prince's army drawn up on Culloden Moor, about four miles east of Inverness. Desertion had so thinned its ranks that it numbered but five thousand men, little more than half the number that had been at Falkirk. Dissension and disappointment, moreover, had dashed the spirits of those that remained. On the other hand, the English, notwithstanding the previous day's brandy and cheese, were in a cheerful temper; their commander was naturally very popular at the moment, and even so exacting a critic as Wolfe considered him "a great and gallant general." And indeed Cumberland was fully equal to the task he had in hand. He drew up his force in three lines, placing his cavalry on the wings. There was nothing remarkable in that; but the troops saw with astonishment that he had stationed two guns between every two regiments of the front line. He had also given instructions that when the Highlanders charged with their dreaded claymores, each foot soldier should thrust with his bayonet, not at the man who was cutting at him, but at the next to the right, so as to avoid his wooden target and pierce him under his upraised sword-arm. Whether this device was effectual we do not know; but it must have been good for the morale of the rank and file, who like to feel that their commander is

alive to their personal problems. Having ordered his array, Cumberland addressed such of the troops as could hear him in a speech which must have sounded familiar to officers who knew Shakespeare's *Henry V*; but the men are said to have been pleased, though their answering shout of “Flanders! Flanders!” however well meant, was scarcely tactful.

Cumberland then moved forward till he was within effective artillery range. The ten English guns in the front line, firing grape, quite outmatched the four with which the Highlanders opposed them. Suffering grievously, the Prince's men fell back a little way in some disorder, but then, rallying, they flung down their still loaded muskets, and charged with headlong valour. Artillery and musketry mowed them down as they came on, and only on the left did they get to close quarters. There Wolfe's regiment was stationed, though he was not actually with it, and for a short while it was surrounded by the Camerons, some of whom broke into its ranks. The men however went on fighting resolutely, and according to Wolfe the bayonet did far more execution than the broadsword; after a few minutes the regiment on the left of the second line came to the rescue; and with the flight of the brave Camerons the crisis was over. Meanwhile, Hawley's cavalry, on the extreme left, had cleared the ground in front of them by pulling down two stone walls, a task in which they were aided by Campbell Highlanders — a useful reminder that the clans were not all on Prince Charlie's side. Thus when the attack on the foot was repulsed the horse were able to make a successful charge, which scattered the defeated army in headlong rout. The losses of the vanquished were terrible — 1500 in killed and 700 in prisoners, not to mention all their artillery. The Stewart cause was irretrievably ruined.

Next day Wolfe wrote two long letters describing the battle. In neither of them does he say anything about the part he himself played. Presumably he was in attendance on Hawley. He

wrote in high spirits, and in a somewhat vindictive and boastful tone. "All the troops," he says, "acquitted themselves as troops worthy the command of a great and gallant General, and no individual corps has been wanting in their duty." "Orders," he asserts, "were publicly given in the rebel army, the day before the action, that no quarter should be given to our troops. We had an opportunity of avenging ourselves, and I assure you as few prisoners were taken of the Highlanders as possible." "You must observe," he continues, "that it blew and rained very hard almost from the time we marched from our camp at Nairn, till just the battle began [*sic*] when it became fair and continued so the remainder of the day. Another thing you must take notice of, that the rebels were the night before the action within three miles of our camp, intending to surprise and attack us in the dark; but some unforeseen accident, together with a great deal of superstition, turned them back. These circumstances with many others I could name, will make every discerning man observe from whence only our success can proceed. I heartily wish you joy of the happy end of so horrid an undertaking. And may they ever be punished in the same manner who attempt the like!" Evidently all the superstition was not on one side. And this letter makes one eager to believe the truth of a story, first printed more than fifty years later, and since many times repeated. It is said that while riding over the battlefield with Wolfe at his side, the Duke of Cumberland noticed a wounded Highlander smiling derisively at him. "Wolfe," he said, "shoot me that Highland scoundrel who dares look on us with such contempt and insolence!" "My commission," was the reply, "is at your Royal Highness's disposal, but I can never consent to become an executioner." The authority for the tale is not good; the incident is precisely of the sort that always becomes associated with a famous man, no matter who was actually concerned: but in view of the ungenerous sentiments in

the letter just quoted, one may well wish it to be true that Wolfe, who would certainly not have murdered a wounded man, was given the chance of risking his career in order to prove it.

On reflection, Wolfe's approval of the conduct of the victors in the battle seems to have cooled. Five years later he revisited the scene of the conflict, and writing to his father immediately afterwards, he says: "I have surveyed the field of battle of Culloden with great exactness, and find room for a military criticism as well as place for a little ridicule upon some famous transactions of that memorable day. The actors shine in the world too high and bright to be eclipsed; but it is plain they don't borrow much of their glory from their performance upon that occasion, however they may have distinguished themselves in later events." He does not, however, specify what he believes to have been badly done, merely hinting that the blame for running unnecessary risk and for failure to press the pursuit lay rather with certain subordinate officers than with the Duke himself. But even after this lapse of time, the defeated Highlanders are still "those ruffians."

After the battle there followed those stern measures of repression which have earned for Cumberland the title of "Butcher." In point of fact, he was not a conspicuously brutal man; and he no doubt took it for granted that things like that must be after a famous victory. There is no reason whatever to suppose that Wolfe was shocked at what was done, though now and then he probably questioned its wisdom. For two or three months he was at Fort Augustus, near Inverness, performing his duties as aide-de-camp to Hawley. In July the Duke went back to England, taking with him a great part of the army. The rest was distributed in various parts of Scotland to keep the disaffected in awe. Wolfe was sent with a company of men to rebuild the fort of Inversnaid on Loch Lomond, in a region then regarded as very remote and forbidding. It was no doubt with much pleasure that

in November he received orders to rejoin his regiment, once again in the Netherlands, in six weeks' time. He was thus able to spend Christmas at the London house of his parents in Old Burlington Street, where it is still standing.

When Wolfe went overseas in January, he found his regiment in South Holland. In the previous year, taking advantage of the absence of the English troops that had been sent to Scotland, the French had overrun almost the whole of the Austrian Netherlands. With the prestige of Culloden investing him, the Duke of Cumberland was now made commander-in-chief of the whole army of the Allies. It was as usual an ill-compacted array, numbering upwards of 120,000 men, of whom 32,000 were furnished by the British government, though only about a quarter of these were of British nationality. The Duke soon found that a French army under Marshal Saxe was a different enemy from a collection of untrained clansmen under Bonnie Prince Charlie. A premature offensive was speedily halted by lack of munitions and supplies, and the French recovered the initiative without trouble. Saxe's objective was the important town of Maestricht, and Cumberland's attempt to prevent him from approaching it led to the bloodiest battle in which Wolfe was ever engaged. It was fought at the little village of Laffeldt, three miles west of the town, on July 2, 1747. In character it resembled many of the battles of the Great War. The village, held at first by the British, was four times attacked in vain. A fifth assault put it definitely in French hands, for an attempted counter-attack broke down through the misconduct of a body of Dutch cavalry. The situation was critical, since the allied centre was pierced and a panic was impending; but a self-sacrificing charge of British and Austrian horse under Sir John Ligonier checked the French advance for a short while, and gave the allied foot time to rally. Cumberland was thus able to make an orderly retreat and to throw reinforcements into Maestricht. The allies lost 5700 in killed and

wounded, but the victory of the French, besides costing them 10,000 casualties, brought them no substantial advantage, for the strengthened garrison of Maestricht showed so stout a defence that after a few weeks Saxe abandoned a siege which had never been keenly pressed.

There is no description of the battle from Wolfe's hand, nor have we any particulars of the part he played in it. In a letter written some years later, he speaks of the devoted conduct of his servant, who, fearing for his master's life, brought him a fresh horse in the heat of the action, the man being wounded and the horse shot dead. The inference that Wolfe behaved with conspicuous daring is confirmed by the fact that he was wounded in the body by a musket ball and that he afterwards received the formal thanks of the commander-in-chief for his services. The wound seems not to have been serious, and after a week or two in a field hospital he presumably returned to his duties as brigade-major. At all events, it was not until the late autumn that he was permitted to go home.

Wolfe now spent three or four months in London, and made his first real acquaintance with good English society. On January 2 he came of age, and he celebrated the attainment of man's estate by falling in love. So far as we know, he had never done so before, though he had had mild and transient flirtations, one, it appears, conducted silently in church even before he became a soldier. This time, however, he was hit fairly hard. The lady was Elizabeth Lawson, a maid of honour to the Princess of Wales; her father was a baronet, her mother the niece of an earl, and she had an uncle who was a general. That she was very beautiful (her picture fully confirms this estimate) and, in his opinion, very charming, was probably enough for Wolfe; but even with her distinguished connections she failed to satisfy his parents. As yet, however, Wolfe's plight was, it seems, known to himself alone.

In the spring a peace conference was held at Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle, as the French and usually the English called this German town. Diplomacy in the eighteenth century was even more formal and verbose than it is now, and as the negotiations might last many months, both sides prepared for another campaign. So in March Wolfe was ordered to Holland on special service with a German corps in English pay. He was put in charge of its commissariat, and had some valuable experience of the ways of army contractors. The task was not to his liking, and he had tried to avoid it; but it was well for him to become acquainted with every side of his profession, and he was cheered by an informal assurance that the Duke of Cumberland had something better in store for him.

The Duke was ill, and Marshal Saxe even more active than usual; so the operations soon took a turn unfavourable to the Allies. Early in April the French renewed the siege of Maestricht without interference from their enemies, who had been completely surprised by Saxe's clever strategy. Fear lest Maestricht might fall made the allied plenipotentiaries at Aix-la-Chapelle more disposed to offer concessions, and on April 30 a treaty of peace was signed. Seldom has a war been made to look so foolish. Both French and British restored all their conquests. The former recovered Cape Breton, which had been taken by the New Englanders and the navy, and they were granted the satisfaction of occupying Maestricht until the treaty was ratified. On their side, they were to evacuate the Netherlands, and to return Madras to the English East India Company.

For six months after fighting ceased the armies remained encamped. As we have seen in our own days, such a time is very trying to the patience and temper of both officers and men. Wolfe's letters during this period are a little peevish and sometimes positively unreasonable. His restless ambition was never more strikingly displayed. No sooner was fighting over than he

wanted leave to travel in Europe, with the double object of broadening his mind and learning something of the methods of foreign armies. That his request was refused was in the circumstances natural and indeed proper; the troops had to be taken back to England and new duties had to be allotted to them; it was no moment for young officers to be touring the Continent. But Wolfe, in his disappointed zeal, wrote bitterly of his superiors, accusing them of indifference to the efficiency of the army. His discontent was doubtless aggravated by the state of his health. His mother had sent him £50 that he might supplement the regular diet of his mess; and, writing to her in June, he says: "I have been prodigiously careful of my own thin person, and I think I have used all the remedies, prescriptions, unguents, etc., that were not only useful, but even thought so, in complaisance to other opinions; and I am thoroughly reinstated. Your green oil in particular was of singular service to me, for a hurt I received by the falling of my horse (not from my horse), and that's well likewise." When Wolfe admitted that he had been unwell, it generally meant that he had been feeling wretched. However, early in the following winter, he was again at home, where he spent Christmas and began to pay serious court to Miss Lawson. With this return to England, a well-marked phase of his life came to an end.

Wolfe saw no more active service until, eight years later, he was chosen by Pitt to fill an important position in an ambitious undertaking. It is well, therefore, to pause at this point and consider what he had done and what qualities he had shown. To do him justice it is necessary to consider the part played by Great Britain in the war that had lately ended. In the peace treaty the two sides practically called it a draw. The text-books of history usually mention the battles of Dettingen (a victory) and Fontenoy (a glorious reverse). They tell too of the failure of the Pretender, and suggest that none of the fights which his venture occa-

sioned was of much consequence except Culloden. They probably notice the capture of Louisbourg. The loss of Madras is generally recorded, but as a rule in a section devoted specially to events in India, so that later British successes are mentioned immediately afterwards, and give the impression that this misfortune was an insignificant accident. Thus even among well-informed people the idea prevails that in the War of the Austrian Succession the British army did rather well. The truth is that there has scarcely been a war in which it appeared to worse advantage. There was little fault to find with the rank and file, who always fought bravely and were usually steady when sensibly led. But the ministers who directed affairs from home were, with hardly an exception, quite unfit to conduct a war. The generals they appointed to high command were mostly infirm dotards or brainless swashbucklers. The Duke of Cumberland was the best, but his capacity was hardly second-rate. Corruption, favouritism, and slackness prevailed everywhere. The results were what might have been predicted. The victory of Dettingen, as we have seen, was due to the folly of the French, and its fruits were thrown away. The other continental battles in which the British took a considerable part were defeats, and whatever credit the army drew from them it owed almost entirely to the non-commissioned officers and men. The British had gone to the Continent to save the Netherlands from the French, and at the end of the war the French had conquered the Austrian part and had invaded Holland. In the Jacobite rebellion English regulars were twice beaten by untrained Highlanders, and it should be remembered that, if we consider the numbers engaged, Falkirk was a bigger battle than Culloden. As for the capture of Louisbourg, a really notable feat, the regular army had very little to do with it, the land forces concerned consisting of New England militia. In short, if we merely take into account operations on land, the balance of success lay overwhelmingly on the

side of the French. That in the end the British were able to get back all that they had lost was due, in the first place, to their preponderance at sea, though even there many shortcomings had been apparent, and, secondly, to the sorry condition of the French treasury.

Wolfe, then, had been taking part in what for the army was an unsuccessful, if not discreditable, war. There had been little to admire in the High Command; and he had been surrounded by incompetence and inertia. These facts must affect our judgment of him in two ways. They forbid us, on the one hand, to regard him as a juvenile prodigy. That he was adjutant of his battalion at sixteen, captain at seventeen, and brigade-major a year later testified no doubt to his possession of abounding zeal and respectable ability; but when we consider the nature of his comrades, his rapid promotion does not prove him to have possessed exceptional talents, still less genius. And, after all, if you were fit to be a subaltern at fifteen, it was not so wonderful that you should be a brigade-major at eighteen. Wolfe, moreover, had been lucky in catching the eye of the Duke of Cumberland, to whose patronage nearly all his advance was due.

On the other hand, an examination of the circumstances in which Wolfe passed his early years as an officer must arouse great admiration of his character. The temptation to cast aside one's enthusiasm must have been strong. Folly and laziness seemed to serve a man as well as cleverness and energy. What was the good of doing one's small duties well when the total effort to which they contributed always ended in failure? Such considerations doubtless spoiled the life of many a good man in the same position as Wolfe, but on him they had no influence whatever. He was, as we have seen, very prompt with criticism of his superiors, equals, or subordinates. Reading his letters, one cannot but be struck by the rareness of allusions to the other officers of his regiment. More than once he hints that he found

most of them uncongenial, and he seems to have formed no lasting friendship with any of his comrades in either the Twelfth or the Fourth. And yet he liked his life in the army. Writing in dejection in June, 1748, he says: "I never till now knew an army otherwise than as I could have desired it (I don't mean as to the successful part), but then I never knew what it was to wait, in smoke and subjection, the signing articles of peace, and till now have always had, or imagined I had, a prospect of better times." An ambitious and critical young man who could retain his professional keenness throughout the War of the Austrian Succession was likely, with average luck, to advance high in his calling.

And while up to this point Wolfe had not proved himself to be endowed with more than the gifts of a good regimental officer, there is reason to suppose that whatever he had undertaken he had done well. At any rate, nothing suggests that he had ever incurred the disapproval of his superiors. It is remarkable too that in the battles at which Wolfe had been present, the regiment to which he belonged seems always to have acquitted itself creditably, no matter how the rest of the army may have fared.

This promising young man was now to be exposed to a more severe test than any he had yet undergone. We may picture him as he was on his twenty-second birthday — a lanky, ungainly figure, six foot three in height; his features undistinguished, perhaps even a little comical in profile, but pleasing when regarded from the front; his blue eyes very alert and lively; his frequent smile most attractive. His manners, albeit a little stiff, were courteous; in company he was perhaps rather too talkative; and though his sense of humour and a capacity for what is commonly called ragging often appear in his letters, his conversation, one suspects, was sometimes unseasonably solemn. Still, taken all round, he must have been an agreeable fellow, astonishingly unspoilt by the success that had hitherto attended his career.

CHAPTER IV
IN COMMAND OF A REGIMENT:
SCOTLAND, 1749-1752

EARLY in January, 1749, Wolfe was promoted to the substantive rank of major and ordered to join the Twentieth Regiment of Foot, now the Lancashire Fusiliers, at the moment quartered at Stirling. When Wolfe arrived, about the beginning of February, he found himself the commanding officer. His colonel, Lord George Sackville, was not present. There was nothing unusual in that, for the colonels of those times, though their functions were not merely honorary and ceremonial like those of the royal and noble personages who bear the title nowadays, were seldom in active command, an occasional visit of inspection to their regiments being all that was expected of them. Ordinarily the lieutenant-colonel was the real commander, but the Honourable Edward Cornwallis, lieutenant-colonel of the Twentieth, was about to sail for Nova Scotia as Governor and Captain-General of that colony, on which his doings were to leave a mark that has never been obliterated.¹ As he was expected to return in two years, no successor was at first appointed. But he was away much longer and never went back to the Twentieth, so that Wolfe had nothing to do with him until long afterwards and in a different sphere. With Lord George Sackville, he had more dealings. Wolfe's colonel was a handsome man, a prominent figure in London society, with a high reputation in the army. Wolfe greatly admired him, their relations were always pleasant, and his esteem was reciprocated. Later Lord George fell into disgrace for refusing to advance at the

¹ He founded Halifax and first made effective the British occupation of Nova Scotia.

battle of Minden; he was dismissed from the army and widely believed to have shown cowardice. But of all this Wolfe never heard.

When Wolfe reached Stirling, he was confronted with an extremely difficult and delicate task. It was hard enough for a man of twenty-two to be called upon to take command of a regiment whose officers were nearly all older than himself. And the conditions under which the troops were serving made the test far more searching than it normally would have been. The suppression of the rising of 1745 had left the Highland clans smarting with bitter memories. Once the fighting and hanging and confiscations were over, they had fondly expected to resume their old life, and their desire for revenge was doubled when they realised that this was not to be permitted. When considering the measures of the British government after the rebellion, one should remember that the Highlands had never been properly reduced to order, whether before or after the Union between Scotland and England. The Jacobite rising of 1715 had been followed by an attempt to introduce Lowland law and civilisation into the Highlands. Forts were built here and there, and remote mountain regions were penetrated by roads, in the construction of which Marshal Wade made his indestructible reputation. It was thought that once the clansmen were brought into touch with the attractions of southern culture, they would make haste to embrace it. And for nearly thirty years they were outwardly content, even if they showed small inclination to change their manners and customs. But the events of 1745 proved that their loyalty to the established authorities was only superficial. The government realised that they would never conform to the ways of their southern neighbours except under constraint. The Highlands had a polity of their own, and unless it was destroyed they would remain, to all intents and purposes, an autonomous region, whose existence would be a continual menace to the se-



III.

Mrs. Henrietta Wolfe, mother of James Wolfe. From an engraving after the portrait by Thomas Hudson, now at Squerryes Court, Westerham.

curity of the remainder of Great Britain. Already, notwithstanding their defeat and punishment, the Highlanders were again lifting cattle and levying blackmail. So the British Parliament passed laws which struck at the roots of Highland society. Hitherto the Highland chiefs had exercised over their clans an hereditary authority and jurisdiction which gave them a far greater hold on the obedience and loyalty of their subjects than was enjoyed by any royal official or indeed the king himself. Their political and judicial powers were now taken from them, and Highlanders were made subject to the same officials and the same courts as other Scotsmen. The change was the more easily carried out since the lands of many Jacobite chiefs had been forfeited. No less effectual were the enactments which forbade Highlanders to possess arms or wear their distinctive costume. It was furthermore decreed that the clergy of the Scottish Episcopal Church, on pain of harsh punishment, were to swear allegiance to the House of Hanover and Protestant succession, and to pray publicly for King George, duties which in the past they had commonly evaded with impunity. For the enforcement of these edicts, the English garrison in the Highlands was greatly strengthened as soon as the war on the Continent was over.

It was Wolfe's duty to do all he could to counteract disloyal activity and promote the observance of the new regulations; at the same time he must avoid needless irritation of the people and try to reconcile them to new habits of life. His own men had to be kept in just the right temper: they must not become intimate with civilians against whom they might next day be ordered to execute harsh measures, while on the other hand they must not provoke quarrels by insolent behaviour. It was thus Wolfe's aim to convince both soldiers and civilians that, though he would stand no nonsense, he wished to do his work with all possible consideration for everyone concerned.

To understand Wolfe's doings and experiences in Scotland,

one should bear in mind that the time he was now to spend there was the most unhappy part of his life. He disliked the people, both Highlanders and Lowlanders. The climate did not suit his health, which became very bad. In those days Scotland differed from England and Scotsmen from Englishmen far more than they do now. The two countries had been under a single government for less than half a century. Their common traditions were few, their mutual dislike was inveterate. In population and wealth Scotland was far behind her neighbour. Her standard of living was immensely lower. To an Englishman even the Lowlands lacked the elementary decencies and amenities of civilised life, while the Highlands were simply barbarous. The snug villages and comfortable farmsteads, which were so common in the English countryside, were hardly to be seen north of the Border. The whole country had only one populous town — Edinburgh, and the Edinburgh of that date was no city of spacious streets and noble prospects; it comprised merely what is now called the Old Town, a huddle of closes and wynds darkened by towering houses, with the castle at one end and Holyrood at the other, linked by the High Street and Canongate, which, though bordered by the residences of the well-to-do, were yet offensive to eyes and noses from England, for the public thoroughfares were the dumping-ground for all kinds of garbage and sewage. Other cities and towns lagged humbly behind the magnificence of the capital. Glasgow, though rapidly growing in prosperity since the Union, was a mean-looking place with no more than 20,000 inhabitants. Aberdeen, if smaller, seems to have been more presentable; but in English eyes Stirling, Perth, and Inverness were nothing but dirty villages. Nor could the Englishman in Scotland console himself with the romance or beauty of the country. For Wolfe's contemporaries romance hardly existed; and in any case it needed a Walter Scott to convince Englishmen that there was anything romantic about so

forbidding a country as Scotland. For Scottish scenery made no appeal at all to the typical eighteenth-century mind. From the creation until the year 1800 or thereabouts the normal man regarded mountains and moors with an aversion bordering on fear. In Wolfe's day people of culture affected to admire rural scenery, but what they really liked were shaven lawns, symmetrical flower-beds, trim hedges, and verdant acclivities. The few adventurers who scaled such mountains as those of the Lake District were usually escorted by a train of attendants which would seem excessively large to a modern explorer of Equatorial Africa, and we read of a party who when they ascended Saddleback — which is out-topped by many neighbouring peaks — took with them a surgeon, lest the sight of the precipices should cause such a swimming of the head as to necessitate a little blood-letting. Twenty or thirty years before Wolfe was sent to Stirling, an English officer called Burt spent some time on military duty in the Highlands, and recorded his impressions in a number of very entertaining letters. Captain Burt was a well-informed and open-minded man, who honestly tried to form unprejudiced opinions about the country and its people. Towards the Highlanders he was more charitable than Wolfe. But Highland scenery he could not abide. The mountains, he says, are indescribably gloomy in appearance, and more than usually repulsive when the heather is in bloom. When Wolfe joined the Twentieth at Stirling, he would probably have agreed.

Unpleasant though the future must have looked, Wolfe entered upon his duties with his customary ardour. Many, if not all, of the regimental Orders which he issued have been preserved. The earliest are dated "Sterling, February 12th, 1748-9." Here are some extracts.

The Major Recommends very particularly to the men to keep their Quarters clean, as he is Convinced that nothing Conduces more to their Health, the Serjeants and Corporals will, in visiting the

Quarters daily, give the necessary Attention to this Article, that when the Major or any of the Officers Inspect these Quarters, they will be found in proper Order.

The Serjeants are always to wear their Swords, they are not to put on their great Coats between troop beating and Tatoo, unless the weather should be remarkably bad, the Corporals are never to be seen without side Arms.

No Soldier is to leave his guard during the 24 Hours he is upon Duty, without his Officers consent, as that and every other negligence where service is concerned will be punished with rigour.

The Soldiers to avoid all Kinds of Disputes with the Inhabitants and if at any time the [*sic*] should happen any Tumult or Riot, they are by no means to mix with the People of the Town, or be concerned with them, the Officer of the guard is to order a Detachment to seize any man who Disobeys, and make them Prisoners . . .

Some quotations from a paper of "Instructions for young officers," drawn up by Wolfe a few years later, may be inserted here:

[Officers are to] make themselves acquainted with . . . the men of the companies they belong to; and so soon as possible with their characters, that they may know the proper subjects to encourage . . . as well as those also whom it will be necessary to keep a strict hand over. . . . They must occasionally go round the quarters between nine and eleven at night . . . not always trusting to the reports of serjeants. . . . They are to attend the looks of the men, and if any are thinner or paler than usual, the reasons . . . may be enquired into, and proper means used to restore them.

These passages clearly reveal the spirit in which Wolfe entered upon his command. Discipline was to be strictly maintained, among both officers and men. There must be no shirking of duty or hardship. If Wolfe's regiment fell short of the demands made upon it by his superiors, it would not be "all along o' dirtiness, all along o' mess, all along o' doin' things rather more or less." Such things pertained to the heathen in his blindness, for to Wolfe the Highlander was no better, and so his men

more or less." Such things pertained to the heathen in his blindness, for to Wolfe the Highlander was no better, and so his men must keep a proper distance between themselves and the natives who surrounded them. Yet for the welfare of the men he was keenly solicitous; to him they were human individuals and not merely sub-divisions of platoons. We may suspect that the officers of the Twentieth grumbled and scoffed at the orders of their fussy new major; but his methods were to be gloriously vindicated when they underwent the test of active service.

Stirling cannot have been a very amusing place for a young officer, whatever his tastes; but what Wolfe thought of it we do not know. He was glad when, after a few weeks, the regiment was ordered to Glasgow. There were no barracks or castle at Glasgow, and Wolfe took up his quarters in a house in the suburb of Camlachie, where he had the chance of making himself fairly comfortable. For all that, he found little in the town to praise. About the climate, indeed, he says less than many others have done; but it is seldom that such outspoken criticism of the inhabitants has been expressed in writing. "The men," he roundly asserts after two or three weeks among them, "are civil, designing, and treacherous, with their immediate interest always in view; they pursue trade with warmth and a necessary mercantile spirit, arising from the baseness of their other qualifications. The women, coarse, cold, and cunning, for ever enquiring after men's circumstances. They make that the standard of their good breeding." This merciless verdict was in part mitigated less than a fortnight later, when he says: "This place is very far from being as disagreeable as it appeared at first. The ladies are very civil and in great numbers, and they are not so desperately afraid of a soldier as formerly. The inhabitants still retain all the religion they ever had, I dare say, with rather less outward ostentation and mockery of devotion, for which they were justly remarkable." If the last sentence be thought unduly scandalous,

what will be said of the paragraph with which the same letter closes?

I do several things in my character of commanding officer which I should never think of in any other; for instance, I'm every Sunday at the Kirk, an example justly to be admired. I would not lose two hours of a day if it did not answer some end. What I say "lose two hours," I must explain to you that the generality of Scotch preachers are excessive blockheads, so truly and obstinately dull, that they seem to shut out knowledge at every entrance. They are not like our good folks. Ours are priests, and though friends to *venaison*, they are friends to sense.

Wolfe's subordinates evidently shared his views without following his example, for when Lord George Sackville was with the regiment in the summer, he formally announced his hope that "decency, and a proper sense of duty, will for the future prevail upon the officers to attend upon Divine Service, and that the commanding officer of the regiment may not be obliged to order them to church with their respective companies." By the middle of August the regiment's Anglican chaplain had joined it, and Wolfe abandoned the Kirk of Scotland for the services of the church in which he had been brought up. It may conveniently be remarked at this point that, while Wolfe never spoke slightly of religion or of the clergy of his own communion, and while he was punctilious in the religious observances looked for from one of his station, he was not what is commonly called a religious man. Doubtless he would have asserted his belief in the creeds and articles accepted in the Church of England; but it is probable that the matters they treated did not naturally interest him. For an officer of that age, he lived an extraordinarily clean and upright life; but he apparently suffered little temptation to do otherwise, and he certainly did not worry about the state or prospects of his soul. It was of course a time when religious emotion was regarded with suspicion, and to talk about

it was almost improper. Still, even if allowance be made for this, the evidence suggests that Wolfe's mind tended to fix itself on the things of this world rather than the next. "A battle gained is, I believe, the highest joy mankind is capable of receiving, to him who commands." So he declared in one of his letters from Glasgow; and the sentiment, whatever one may think of it, would become a Viking of the eighth century better than an Anglican of the eighteenth.

In Glasgow, which was loyal to the House of Hanover, the regiment's duties were not in the least exciting, except when it was called out to fight a big fire in the district known as the Gorbals, an occasion when it gained the strong approval of the citizens. When summer began, Wolfe was instructed to supply 300 men for road-making in the Highlands, but he was not required to accompany them. In June the arrival of Lord George Sackville relieved Wolfe for a while of the burdens of command. He made himself very pleasant, and convinced Wolfe of his intention to promote the major's interests; but when he left, about the middle of August, it was known that he would probably be given the command of a regiment of dragoons, an event which shortly afterwards came to pass. The severance of their official relations caused Wolfe genuine regret.

Life in Glasgow had one notable alleviation. Wolfe was very conscious of the defects in his education. Probably it was no worse than that of most of his brother officers; but Wolfe could not content himself with learning how to perform his bare duties; and he was always afraid of becoming sluggish in mind and uncouth in body. Glasgow, indeed, could not do much for his deportment and manners; but it had a university that was then better than either Oxford or Cambridge, and at the first opportunity Wolfe engaged two tutors, one to teach him mathematics, the other to assist him to regain "my almost lost Latin." "The College," he quaintly adds, "furnishes abundantly all parts of

learning to the inquisitive." To each of his subjects he gave an hour a day, and he apparently stuck steadily to his studies throughout the stay of the regiment in the city. How the Latin progressed we do not hear; but mathematics was not wholly congenial, as Wolfe frankly reveals in a letter to his mother dated September 8.

I don't know how the mathematics may assist the judgment, but they have a great tendency to make men dull. I, who am far from being sprightly even in my gaiety, am the very reverse of it at this time. I'm heavier in discourse, longer at a letter, less quick of apprehension, and carry all the appearances of stupidity to so great a height, that in a little time they won't be known from the reality; and all this to find out the use and property of a crooked line, which, when discovered, serves me no more than a straight one, and does not make me a jot more useful or more entertaining, but, on the contrary, adds to the weight that nature has laid upon the brain, and blunts the organs.

Notwithstanding his self-depreciation, this passage is not altogether discreditable to Wolfe's judgment.

Though Wolfe came to regard Glasgow as the best place in Scotland where troops were quartered, he was never content while he was there. It happened that the summer was execrable. On July 19 he had a big fire in his room. At the beginning of August he writes, "I had very near relapsed for want of sun, and it is more or less cloudy every day." In the middle of the month, "the elements," he exclaims, "seem to have conspired against the face of this earth, first by the destruction of every kind of fruit, and now by endangering the harvest. . . . If the hand of the Lord be not upon them, they are in a terrible latitude." A month later it was clear that "the harvest throughout all the west of Scotland is utterly destroyed."

Such weather naturally did no good to Wolfe's health. In the spring, much to his concern, he suffered from an unwonted lassitude, a not surprising effect of the climate of west Scotland at

that season. Writing to his mother in July, he says, "It is not easy to describe myself in my present state. If I say I'm thinner, you'll imagine me a shadow, or a skeleton in motion. In short I'm everything but what the surgeons call a subject for mere anatomy; as far as muscles, bones, and the larger vessels can serve their purpose, they have a clear view of them in me, distinct from fat or fleshy impediment." In the autumn he was suffering from depression, but promised himself a visit to Edinburgh after Christmas, "when the place is in all its perfection of dirt and gaiety. . . . It will help," he adds, "to dispel melancholy, and I have been told that a certain smell is a remedy for the vapours; there I can't fail to meet the cure." He thought of taking up shooting for exercise, and bought a gun; but it is not certain that he used it while at Glasgow.

During these months he was troubled in mind as well as in body. The commanding officer of a regiment was expected to cut a good figure in such society as his environment afforded; but when Wolfe arrived in Glasgow he was very hard up. He found Glasgow prices exorbitant. "I give you my word," he told his mother, "that the common demand for my horse, servants, washing, lodging, and diet, is no less than three pounds ten shillings a week. Judge then what there is over, for many other things not less requisite, at fifteen pounds a month. I reckon myself to have a shilling and a penny a day for what they call pocket money." He had, much against his will, to apply to his parents for help; his mother, it seems, at once did what she could, and though his father was not very gracious, he in the end agreed to give him a quarterly allowance. His worst anxieties were thus relieved; but, as he pointed out, it was still difficult for a major with small private resources to live up to the tradition established by rich men of noble birth like Lord George Sackville and Lieutenant-Colonel Cornwallis.

What made Wolfe's position particularly embarrassing was

the fact that he was drifting towards a serious breach with his parents over Elizabeth Lawson. It has been mentioned that he fell in love with her during his visit to London in the winter of 1747-8. A year later, the war being over, he contrived to see more of her while he was at home. "She made," he says, "surprising progress in that short time, and won all my affections." So far as he could discover, her mother and General Mordaunt, her uncle, would have had no serious objection to the match, and it is said that Elizabeth herself, had she followed her inclinations, would gladly have accepted him. She is also reported to have declared that, whatever her own wishes, there were insurmountable obstacles to the marriage. Of this, however, Wolfe seems to have heard nothing; and indeed the evidence that she ever made such an assertion is very slight. To him, the source of opposition was his parents. Neither had any personal objection to Miss Lawson. Nor, in all probability, would the General have remained obdurate if left to his own impulses. But Mrs. Wolfe, with the Yorkshire regard for "brass," thought that her son might get something better than £12,000, which even the love-lorn Wolfe admitted was "no more than I have a right to expect." And there was withal in Croydon a Miss Hoskins, who had two-and-a-half times as much; and since she went so far as to send Wolfe her compliments — very saucy behaviour for a young lady of that time — he could probably have had her for the asking. Possibly he was repelled by the friend who brought the message and, seeking to commend her to Wolfe, could find nothing better to say than that she was "a complete woman." At all events, he remained faithful to Miss Lawson, and his feelings and prospects in regard to her cannot have been conducive to his peace of mind. Nevertheless, Wolfe's biographers have perhaps exaggerated the importance of this affair. That he was very fond of the girl there can be no doubt; but there was never any danger of his breaking his heart over her, and, so far as we can

tell, his profession always meant more to him than his love. As early as April, 1749, in a letter to his intimate friend Captain Rickson, he says at the end of a long passage about Miss Lawson: "If a company in the Guards is bought for me, or I should be happy enough to purchase any lieutenant-colonel's commission within this twelvemonth, I shall certainly ask the question; but if I'm kept long here [Glasgow], the fire will be extinguished. Young flames must be constantly fed, or they'll evaporate." Lovers are given to idle chatter, and it may be that Wolfe, when he talked like this, was not quite sincere. But his later conduct rather suggests that he was. For the present, however, his ardour burned brightly and was perhaps fanned by the attempts of his parents to quench it.

In the middle of October, 1749, the Twentieth, much to Wolfe's regret, was ordered to Perth. He had already resigned himself, not without lamentation, to the prospect of a whole winter in Scotland. Perth was not an attractive place, the inhabitants did not please him, and to his English mind the manners of the women were disconcertingly unconventional, though he honestly admitted that little harm seemed to result. It was an advantage that at Perth he had much less to do than at Glasgow; but of course it was harder to make profitable use of his leisure. Some of his time was occupied by correspondence with Lord Bury, who had succeeded Lord George Sackville as colonel of the regiment. Bury had been a friend of Wolfe's, but his subsequent conduct shows him to have been a selfish, unprincipled, and overbearing man. The regiment was not likely to be much troubled with his presence; but at first he evidently thought it advisable to make a pretence of interest in its welfare, and asked numerous questions in frequent letters, to which Wolfe replied at length. During the winter there was much speculation about the successor to Cornwallis, who had definitely left the regiment. Wolfe naturally hoped to fill the vacancy, and he had no doubt that Lord George

would use his influence in his favour; but of Bury's intentions he was not so sure, while the views of the Duke of Cumberland, which were still more important, long remained uncertain. In the end, however, everyone concerned acted as Wolfe wished, and in March, 1750, he received his commission as lieutenant-colonel, after performing the duties proper to that rank for more than a year. He was unaffectedly delighted, and it is pleasant to find that his officers gave him a dinner in honour of his promotion. It was an exalted position for a man of twenty-three; yet, though Wolfe had a good conceit of himself, he was in little danger of having his head turned. Some months previously he had written:

To-morrow Lord George Sackville goes away, and I take upon me the difficult and troublesome employment of a Commander. You can't conceive how hard a thing it is to keep the passions within bounds, when authority and immaturity go together; to endeavour at a character that has every opposition from within, and that the very condition of the blood is a sufficient obstacle to. Fancy you see me, that must do justice to both good and bad; reward and punish with an equal unbiassed hand; one that is to reconcile the severity of discipline to the dictates of humanity; one that must study the tempers and dispositions of many men, in order to make their situation easy and agreeable to them, and should endeavour to oblige all without partiality, a mark set up for everybody to observe and judge of; and last of all, suppose me employed in discouraging vice and recommending the reverse at the turbulent age of twenty-three, when it is possible I may have as great a propensity that way as any of the men that I converse with.

With such a capacity for self-criticism, Wolfe must have been unusually secure from the faults and follies incidental to young men in lofty places.

Meanwhile, however, Wolfe's health had continued to trouble him. The bad summer of 1749 had been followed by an exceptionally fine autumn, and Wolfe had some shooting and hunting

then and during the winter; but though his general condition was perhaps better than it had been while he was in Glasgow, he was concerned about an affection of the skin, which was eventually diagnosed as scurvy. Luckily it attacked only his hands; but he became sufficiently anxious about it to contemplate drinking the waters of a medicinal spring in the neighbourhood which was supposed to have anti-scorbutic properties. His mother, who retained all her interest in physic, recommended him to try goat's whey, which he consented to do, after satisfying himself that it was useful for "correcting the bad juices." A course of this remedy was evidently treated with much solemnity. In a letter dated May 29 we read: "I am going into the country for a fortnight or three weeks, there I shall drink goat whey, rather to purify the blood from unclean food and irregular living than as a remedy to any certain known disorder." In the following month he tells his father that he "drank the whey and went into a cold bath fourteen days," and felt much better for it, though he would have liked to continue the treatment a month longer than regimental business had permitted. Nevertheless, whatever the whey may have done, the scurvy soon broke out again "with more violence than ever," a misfortune which Wolfe could not explain, except on the ground that "there must have been in my constitution a strong propensity to that disorder." Some strenuous sport on the moors did more for Wolfe than whey or baths, making him, in his own phrase, "as hard as flint." The next months, however, were among the most unpropitious of his life. In the previous winter his parents had become very peremptory about Miss Lawson. The old general, in fact, had chided his son for "obstinacy and perseverance in error." After a sharp letter or two, they lapsed into silence for some weeks, greatly to Wolfe's concern. Mrs. Wolfe, too, is open to the suspicion of having exaggerated an attack of sciatica to give the impression that her son's disobedience had made her seriously

ill. Wolfe was in a weak position. He could not make both ends meet without the assistance of his parents; and if his father were to disinherit him, as he was quite capable of doing, Elizabeth's kinsfolk would withdraw from him such favour as they had hitherto shown. There is no reason to suppose that she would have consented to a penniless elopement, or that Wolfe would have desired one. In short, his parents were in command of the situation; and that the fact was obvious did not make it any more palatable. For some time Wolfe's letters home were in a vein of pompous politeness. Angry though he was, he neither wished nor dared to break with his parents, but one can imagine him boiling with inward rage as he penned lines like these to his father:

Though I have frequently given you occasion to blame either my neglect or levity, I am not however conscious of ever having intended to give you any uneasiness by obstinacy, or perseverance in an error; the high opinion I have all along entertained of your just sense of things, has always forced me to a proper submission to your will, and obliges me to acknowledge those actions to be actually wrong, when you think them so. Besides, I am so convinced of your sincerity and secure of your friendship that your advice cannot fail of its due weight, nor could I without the highest presumption differ from your sentiments in any of the concerns of life. As what I have said is the exact truth, I mention it by way of making a distinction between that part of my behaviour that is guided by reflection, and such steps as are the consequence of youth and inexperience, or, that have no rule to go by and are the pure effects of chance; but the main reason is to induce you not to look upon any slight omission, or inadvertency as done with design to offend or displease; so far am I from any such intention, that my greatest satisfaction is the means of contributing in some measure to your happiness.

During the summer the subject of Miss Lawson seems to have been dropped from the correspondence of Wolfe and his parents. That after all a quarrel was not averted was probably due in part to another disappointment that Wolfe experienced about

this time. At the end of the war, as we have seen, he had been anxious to get leave for foreign travel. Now, having spent a year and a half on continuous service of an uncongenial kind, he thought that he might revive the project with better chances of success. He wished to improve his knowledge of French and talked of attending the school of artillery and engineering at Metz. His parents approved the plan, though it is not certain that his father did anything to promote it. But Wolfe soon found that Lord Bury, who visited the regiment for a short time during the summer, was unfavourable, and he realised that the consent of the Duke of Cumberland would be hard to get; "for," according to Wolfe, "the perfection of military knowledge, in his Royal Highness's eye, is the command of a regiment to men of our rank, and his notion of care and diligence centres entirely in sticking eternally at the same point, viz. the battalion." "I shall be cruelly disappointed," he adds, "if this fails," and fail it did, for while Wolfe was given extended leave, he was forbidden to go abroad. It has been suggested that the Duke feared lest Wolfe might be attracted into some foreign army, and it is true that there were many British subjects in the forces of continental Powers and that Wolfe had more than once hinted that he might follow their example. Another explanation put forward is that Lord Bury found it very convenient to have a lieutenant-colonel like Wolfe to shoulder all responsibility for his regiment and was determined not to forgo such an advantage for more than a short time. Very likely, too, the army authorities thought that Wolfe was becoming a troublesome and unreasonable young man. He had just, at the age of twenty-three, been made a lieutenant-colonel, and here he was pestering them for permission to leave his command for nearly a year, on the ground that Great Britain did not offer proper facilities for the training of her own officers. One may regret the refusal of Wolfe's application without ascribing much blame to those responsible for it.

But the outcome was that when Wolfe left Scotland at the beginning of November, he was in a sullen and dangerous mood. When arguing in favour of his plans for foreign travel, he had said that "a winter idly spent in London . . . would, at this time, be of sensible prejudice; perhaps infuse such notions and inclinations as are not to be got the better of." Now he would show those who had thwarted his love and his ambitions that he had not been talking at random. Visits to some of his mother's relatives in Yorkshire and subsequently to the House of Commons seem to have wrought no improvement in his temper. At home the General was annoyed by friends whom his son invited to the house, and shocked by the resentment which he expressed at Cumberland's refusal to let him go abroad. The question of his marriage soon came up, introduced no doubt by Mrs. Wolfe, who apparently had a nagging tongue. Not content with urging the attractions of the unattractive Miss Hoskins, she voiced insinuations about the past of Miss Lawson's mother, accompanied, we may guess, with allusions to the principles of heredity. At this Wolfe's wrath blazed forth; he left his parents' house and, on his own confession, played the prodigal son with much thoroughness. Before long sickness ended his excesses and brought repentance; but when he recovered there was no reconciliation, and after a formal farewell to his father and mother, he went back to his regiment.

Writers about Wolfe have usually treated this episode with bated breath. Precisely what he had been doing we do not know. "I lived," he told his friend Rickson, "in the idlest, dissolute, abandoned manner that could be conceived, and that not out of vice which is the most extraordinary part of it." He returned to Scotland determined that he would never repeat the lapse, and, so far as we can tell, he kept his resolve. The truth is that Wolfe's ordinary manner of life was so temperate that it needed but small excess to make him feel like a profligate; and one may



IV. ELIZABETH LAWSON

From a miniature in the McCord National Museum,
McGill University.



V. KATHARINE LOWTHER

From a miniature by Richard Cosway, probably the picture
mentioned in Wolfe's will. Reproduced by permission of Dr. A.
G. Doughty and Dr. G. W. Parnelee.

suspect that he had done nothing which, in the judgment of that age, was particularly shocking in an army officer. At all events, he had certainly not been guilty of anything which his acquaintances and comrades deemed dishonourable; his outbreak did no harm to his career; indeed, it is not unlikely that it increased his popularity among those who knew of it, for there was a touch of priggishness in Wolfe and he was probably liked the better when its grounds had been destroyed.

So far as we can judge, Wolfe's parents were largely to blame for what happened. It is most unlikely that Wolfe himself raised the subject of Miss Lawson. Whatever he may still have felt, he seems to have made up his mind to accept the hopelessness of his suit. Let us remember that here was a lover who had been kept away from the mistress's presence for nearly two years. Yet, faced with the opportunity of spending a long time in her neighbourhood, he turned his back on it, and planned to hasten to the Continent. He had evidently resolved to give his passion nothing to feed on. And then his mother, heedless of his frame of mind, must needs be led by her love of money and scandal into speech that would have infuriated a Job. It is pleasing to learn that, at this very time, the valuable Miss Hoskins was being wooed and won by John Warde of Squerryes Court, who held the £30,000 in wedlock even before Wolfe returned to Scotland. It may be added that, while Wolfe long cherished affectionate memories of Miss Lawson, he never saw her again. She died a maid, though not an old one, for her death occurred six months before Wolfe's.

When, in April 1751, Wolfe got back to the Twentieth it had been moved northward to Banff. His biographer Wright has painted a very gloomy picture of the town as it was at that time; but Wolfe himself gives no reason to suppose that he particularly disliked it. The first weeks of his sojourn there were largely taken up by attempts to conciliate his parents. The General was

evidently inclined to rake up everything that had been said in the heated altercations of the previous winter. Wolfe was ready to express regret for what he had said or done amiss; but some of his utterances and deeds he explained and some he defended, making it quite clear that he would not let the old man bully him. With his mother, who did not write to him for a long time, he discreetly forbore to argue, trying to please her by showing an interest in her domestic affairs. What finally won her over was a very long letter which he wrote in August after a visit to Peterhead. In it he cunningly appealed to her interest in disease and its cure. He had given a three weeks' trial to a mineral water for which the place was celebrated, but found that, while benefiting his "principal complaint" — presumably the scurvy — it unpleasantly affected his lungs and stomach, and gave him a pain in the chest. He thereupon consulted a "physician of reputed knowledge," who advised soap (to be taken internally). All this must have delighted Mrs. Wolfe; but then comes her son's master-stroke in the sentence, "I know you would be glad to contribute something towards the cure of a bad disease, and perhaps I may put it in your power." There follows a request for honey and chocolate — six or eight pounds of the latter — with a suggestion that he has been losing weight. The letter also contains praise of the Peterhead women, and a not very scrupulous hint that Wolfe had succumbed to the charms of at least one of them. A month later he was acknowledging "the many obliging things" in Mrs. Wolfe's last letter.

At the end of September, 1751, Wolfe left Banff for Inverness. It was the most considerable town in the Highlands proper, and Wolfe already knew some of the inhabitants. But of no other place in which he was stationed does he speak so unfavourably. It was indeed very much cut off from what he regarded as civilisation. The mail left only once a week, and in winter the roads

southward were likely to be impassable. To Wolfe's disappointment the adjacent country afforded no hunting for the regiment's hounds and very little shooting for its marksmen. He took as much horse-exercise as he could, but early in November he wrote that the weather had prevented him from riding for several days and that his only recreation was shooting "at the risk of rheumatism." The people were mostly Jacobites, and the dislike that subsisted between them and the soldiers was intense. "A little while," wrote Wolfe, "serves to discover the villainous nature of the inhabitants, and brutality of the people in [the] neighbourhood. Those too who pretend the greatest attachment to the government, and who every day feed upon the public purse, seem to distinguish themselves for greater rudeness and incivility than the open and professed Jacobites." After his custom Wolfe set himself to gain the trust of the inhabitants. He soon met with some success, for on December 13 he wrote: "I did not tell you that we have an assembly of female rebels every fortnight, entirely composed of Macdonalds, Frazers, and McIntoshes. I had the honour to dance last with the daughter of a chieftain who was killed at Culloden, the Laird of Keppock [*sic*]. They are perfectly wild as the hills that breed them; but they lay aside their principles for the sake of sound and movement. They make no converts, which I chiefly attribute to a strong dialect of the Erse that destroys the natural softness of their notes." With other sections of society, different interests had to be consulted. "A man," said Wolfe, "may make a neighbourlike appearance in this cold region with a moderate competency of knowledge, and with a degree of gravity that may supply the deficiency. And whoever goes to kirk (as I do) once a week, and there comports himself with more reverence to the priest than consideration for the nature of the business — herein I sometimes fail — will most assuredly and deservedly obtain the reputation of great wisdom and discretion. We are allowed

to be the most religious foot officers that have been seen in the North for this many a day, and some words are thrown away every Sunday in prayers for our amendment and exemplary life and conversation. See the variety and constant change of things: in most of our quarters we have been looked upon no better than as the sons of darkness, and given up unto Satan; here we are white as the snow that covers all the hills about — not from want of temptation to sin, you may believe, but from sudden conversion and power to resist.” This was not all fooling; Wolfe really did make himself and his men well liked by the people. It must have caused him intense annoyance when Lord Bury, who visited the regiment in the spring, destroyed all the effect of his tact by an exhibition of ill-mannered stupidity which it would be hard to parallel. The Provost and Council of Inverness invited him to attend a celebration of the Duke of Cumberland’s birthday, which it must have gone against their grain to commemorate. Bury replied that, while he would be glad to accept, he thought that the rejoicings might fittingly be postponed to the following day — the anniversary of the battle of Culloden. The Council refused to inflict such an outrage on the feelings of themselves and their fellow-townsmen; but when Bury hinted that he would not be responsible for the conduct of the soldiers if they suspected that the British army was being slighted, the poor councillors thought it wise to comply. We may, however, believe that Wolfe disapproved of Bury’s behaviour without agreeing with a modern writer who assumes that he took no part in the celebrations. His official position would compel him to be present.

Despite a very severe winter Wolfe’s health was exceptionally good while he was at Inverness. He rode as much as he could, finding that this form of exercise suited him better than any other. In May, though he had just broken a “fine large” tooth, he described himself as “extremely well.” The time, however,

had dragged heavily. "We had no other way of distinguishing Christmas," he tells his father, "than that we found it, as commonly it is, the coldest time of the year, and made a larger fire than usual, and ate exceeding bad mince-pies that our suttler, who is a very religious woman, begged we might taste." He tried to resume his studies, and engaged a local schoolmaster to coach him in mathematics. The result was much the same as two years before in Glasgow. In January he reported, "I have read the mathematics till I am grown perfectly stupid, and have algebraically worked away the little portion of understanding that was allotted to me." His letters home during this winter were unusually long, and some of them exceptionally amusing. But he was often the victim of depression and had frequent misgivings about his future. He had remained in the same position for nearly two years — an unprecedented experience; he had been stationed in Scotland for three; promotions were being granted to men whose abilities and records were much inferior to his own; the service on which he was employed seemed to afford no opportunity of gaining distinction; and he recognised in his colonel a man of uncongenial temperament who was more likely to thwart than to promote his desires. When Wolfe was in a melancholy or introspective mood, his style became solemn and sententious, as the following extracts from letters to his mother will show.

Lord Bury professes fairly and means nothing; in that he resembles his father, and a million of other showy men that are seen in palaces and in the courts of kings. He desires never to see his regiment, and wishes that no officer would ever leave it. This is selfish and unjust. They have a way of trifling with their poor soldiery that gives many very honest brave men high disgust. I am sensible it is my duty to be here, and that silences me; otherwise, the care of a regiment of Foot is very heavy, exceeding troublesome, and not at all the thing I delight in, though, as I told you before, the occupation in general is a good one, and hits my genius.

The winter wears away, so do our years, and so does life itself; and it matters little where a man passes his days and what station he fills, or whether he be great or considerable; but it imports him something to look to his manner of life. This day am I five-and-twenty years of age, and all that time is as nothing. When I am fifty (if it ever happen so) and look back, it will be the same; and so on to the last hour. But it is worth a moment's consideration that one may be called away on a sudden, unguarded and unprepared; and the oftener these thoughts are entertained, the less will be the dread or fear of death. You will judge by this sort of discourse that it is the dead of night, when all is quiet and at rest, and one of those intervals wherein men think of what they really are, and what they really should be; how much is expected, and how little performed. . . .

You bid me avoid Fort William, because you believe it still worse than this place. That will not be my reason for wishing to avoid it; but the change of conversation, the fear of becoming a mere ruffian, and of imbibing the tyrannical principles of an absolute commander, or giving way insensibly to the temptations of power, till I become proud, insolent, and intolerable:—these considerations will make me wish to leave the regiment before the next winter, and always (if it could be so) after eight months' duty; that by frequenting men above myself I may know my true condition, and by discoursing with the other sex may learn some civility and mildness of carriage, but never pay the price of the last improvement with the loss of reason. Better be a savage of some use than a gentle amorous puppy, obnoxious to all the world. One of the wildest of all the wild clans is a worthier being than a perfect Philander.

In the cold light of the next morning, Wolfe “had a mind to burn this letter,” but nevertheless sent it, though the paragraphs which he added are less portentous. His fear of becoming overbearing and uncouth was sincere, and appears again in a letter which he wrote to his father in the following March. After alluding to the impending arrival of Lord Bury, he continues:

It will be in the middle of May before we are reviewed. . . . June is everywhere a pleasant month, and in July we may begin to shoot. Lord Bury likes this diversion, and so do I. He'll keep me to

carry his powder-horn and flints; we shall ramble from post to post till he's tired and goes off, and then I shall retreat into Fort William and remain there till further orders. Years roll on in this way, and are (unluckily for us) never to be recalled. Our friends forget us; we grow rustic, hard-tempered and severe, and insensibly fall into a course of thought and action that is more readily observed than corrected. We use a very dangerous freedom and looseness of speech amongst ourselves; this by degrees makes wickedness and debauchery less odious than it should be, if not familiar, and sets truth, religion, and virtue at a great distance. I hear things every day said that would shock your ears, and often say things myself that are not fit to be repeated, perhaps without any ill intention, but merely by the force of custom. The best that can be offered in our defence is, that some of us see the evil and wish to avoid it.

We may well believe that old General Wolfe would have listened without turning a hair to the conversation of the officers of the Twentieth; and it is certain that anyone who was alive to the dangers of which his son complains would not be likely to succumb to them. Still, James's fears for the future were not wholly fanciful. There was some risk of his becoming a self-important martinet, with his outlook bounded by the petty affairs of his regiment. With but little wealth or family influence, he might well be passed over in the award of promotion, until people were so accustomed to seeing him a regimental officer that they took it for granted that he was not fit to be anything higher. The army was full of such men, men whose early career had been of great promise, but who had stuck at the rank of lieutenant-colonel or major or somewhere still lower, had got into a rut, lost hope, and become mere machines when on duty and dissipated bores at other times. Wolfe indeed was not the man to lapse into such a position; but the only way to avoid it might be to leave the service. When Bury visited Inverness Wolfe must have been feeling rather desperate, for he treated his colonel to some plain speaking. "His Lordship," Wolfe told his father,

“pays my attendance upon him with fair words and promises; and he thinks it highly reasonable that my long confinement should have an end, though he is far from being sure of the Duke’s consent. I tell him the matter of fact, that when I feel any extraordinary restraint, and am kept longer with the regiment than is equitable, I hate the sight of a soldier; have nevertheless too much niceness to neglect the service, and too much indifference, as to reputation and applause, to exert myself to any high degree.”

Probably alarmed lest Wolfe should resign his commission, Bury now supported his application for leave, which was accordingly granted. Before it arrived, however, Wolfe and part of the regiment went to Fort Augustus, accompanied by their colonel, who soon became tired and left them. It was during his stay at Fort Augustus that Wolfe heard of the Appin murder, one of the famous crimes of history, familiar to most people to-day through Stevenson’s “Kidnapped.” “You have heard,” wrote Wolfe to his father on May 28, “of the strange murder that was committed about a fortnight since by two Highlanders, at the instigation, it is believed, of a lady, the wife of a banished rebel. The gentleman was an Argyleshire man [Colin Campbell of Glenure], and factor upon some of the forfeited estates. Several men are apprehended upon suspicion, but I’m sure it will be very difficult to discover the actors of this bloody deed. The factor intended to remove the bad tenants and to plant others in their room, and this is supposed to be their reason for killing him.” Wolfe was right about the difficulty of detecting the murderer, for to this day his name is known only by a few, to whom it has been handed down orally from one generation to another.

There was not much to do at Fort Augustus, and Wolfe beguiled the time by visiting some of the smaller British garrisons in the neighbourhood. Soon, however, he set out southward. On June 20 he was at Perth. After a few days there he went by way

of Glasgow to Port Patrick, on the Mull of Galloway, whence he crossed to Ireland to visit his uncle Walter in Dublin. He arrived in that city on July 12, very tired, but "otherwise in better condition than I have known for fourteen months past, leaner than can be described, and burnt to a very chip." The country traversed on his way had pleased him greatly. He had visited the scene of the battle of the Boyne, and, he asserts, "I had more satisfaction at looking at this spot than in all the variety that I have met with; and perhaps there is not another piece of ground in the world that I could take so much pleasure to observe." His uncle, Walter Wolfe, though but a major in rank, had been a good and was still an enthusiastic soldier, and being a bachelor had always taken a great interest in his brother's promising son. The nephew found that he had "preserved his cheerfulness and vivacity," notwithstanding a complaint which, according to his physicians, might be either rheumatism or gout. Dublin appeared to Wolfe to be "a prodigious city," and it is true that in the British Isles it then stood second only to London. "The streets," he said, "are crowded with people of a large size and well limbed, and the women seem very handsome. They have clearer skins and fairer complexions than the women in England or Scotland, and are exceedingly straight and well made. You'll be surprised that I should know this so soon, but I have seen a multitude already, for they take some pains to show themselves." Nevertheless, Wolfe's stay in Dublin lasted but a few days. He continued his journey southward, embarked probably at Cork, sailed to Bristol, and arrived home about the middle of August. He now for the first time saw the General's new residence, Macartney House, on the borders of Blackheath and Greenwich Park. A commodious but far from beautiful building, it is now fronted by Chesterfield Walk and looks much as it did a century and three-quarters ago.

Of Wolfe's relations with his parents during this visit we are

told nothing, but, to judge from the correspondence that followed, they were perfectly harmonious. In the following winter he actually ventured upon one or two allusions to Miss Lawson in letters to his mother, indicating plainly that he was still warmly interested in her, though finally recognising that his passion was futile. His stay at home was not long, for in September he received the long-desired permission to go abroad. He was allowed only six months, so there was not enough time for profitable study of foreign armies, especially as winter was at hand; but it was with great satisfaction that he set out for Paris at the beginning of October, furnished with letters of introduction to various people of importance, the most influential being Lord Albemarle, the British Ambassador, father of Lord Bury. The General had been liberal with his money, and though Wolfe, crossing from Calais to Dover, "never suffered so much in so short a time at sea," he was in very good spirits when, after a five days' journey, he arrived in Paris.

CHAPTER V

PARIS AND GLASGOW, 1752-1753

WOLFE'S letters from Paris are numerous, lively, and interesting. They show him to have been, as one might expect, a shrewd yet fair-minded observer of foreign people and ways. But they do not shed much fresh light upon his character, nor do they contribute anything original to our knowledge of eighteenth-century France. It is therefore not necessary to linger over them.

Wolfe's main purpose in visiting Paris was to improve his knowledge of French and to add polish to his behaviour. He at once engaged a teacher of the language, in which he made good progress, thanks largely to frequent visits to the theatre; but he admitted that he would have done better if he could have maintained his first intention of never using English except in case of real necessity. He also took lessons in riding, fencing, and dancing. His horsemanship must have been fairly good already, but he practised riding assiduously, being on horseback every morning at break of day, as he told his mother in January. At the same time he reported that the fencing-master declared him to have a very quick wrist and no inconsiderable lunge, the latter indeed being a gift of nature. The dancing-master was less enthusiastic. He assured his pupil, after the fashion of dancing-masters, that he had made surprising progress, but that his time in Paris would be too short for him "to possess the minuet to any great perfection," adding the consolation that Wolfe would be able to dance so as not to be laughed at — a prediction in which the pupil did not altogether believe. The expense of all these lessons was of course heavy, but Wolfe justly urged that they

might benefit him in his military career, seeing that "the fortune of a military man seems to depend almost as much on his exteriors as upon things that are in reality more estimable and praiseworthy."

Had he been so minded, Wolfe might have led a very gay life during his stay in Paris. Lord Albemarle proved extremely kind, gave the young man the entry of his Paris house, and enabled him to meet many important and interesting people. He went to Versailles on New Year's Day, when it was customary for all the courtiers to pay their formal respects to the king; but he describes himself as a "cold spectator of what we commonly call splendour and magnificence," and in the tone of a true Whig tells disdainfully how "a multitude of men and women were assembled to bow and pay their compliments in a most submissive manner to a creature of their own species." Nine days later, through the good graces of Lord Albemarle, Wolfe, with some other Englishmen, was presented to the king and the Royal Family, and even to Louis' mistress, Madame de Pompadour, the most influential person in France. "They were all very gracious," according to Wolfe, "as far as courtesies, bows, and smiles go, for the Bourbons seldom speak to anybody." Madame de Pompadour received them while she was curling her hair. Wolfe thought her very handsome and judged that she must have "a great deal of wit and understanding." In general, however, Wolfe led a regular and what passed in Paris for a quiet life, "very singular for a young man that appears to be in the world and in pleasure." His various lessons took up the whole morning. Then he dressed and paid visits, and at two he dined, "two or three times a week at home, sometimes at Lord Albemarle's, and some time [*sic*] with my English acquaintance." At five he generally went to "the public entertainments, which keep you till nine, and at eleven I am always in bed." "Lord Albermarle," he tells his mother, who must have gloated over the

titled names in her son's letters, "has done me the favour to invite me to his house when he has had the foreign ambassadors and some considerable men of this country to dinner, but I have no great acquaintance with the French women, nor am likely to have — it is almost impossible to introduce oneself amongst themselves without losing a great deal of money, which you know I can't afford: besides these entertainments begin at the time I go to bed, and I have not health enough to sit up all night and work all day." The women of Paris, indeed, made but small impression on him: "I am often surprised," he writes, "at the little sensibility that I feel in myself at the sight of the finest and fairest females." Nor did he find the majority of the men prepossessing. "If I should imitate the practice of this country," he declares, "I should study how to talk, how to persuade you that I am the thing I am not. . . . There are men that only desire to shine, and that had rather say a smart thing than do a great one; there are others — rare birds — that had rather be than seem to be. Of the first kind this country is a well-stored magazine; of the second, our own has some few examples. A Frenchman that makes his mistress laugh has no favour to ask of her; he is at the top of his ambition." Towards the end of his visit he informs his mother that "some of the men are prettily turned, and move easily and gracefully. They have in general good faces and fine hair, but they have generally bad limbs, and are ill-shaped. I speak of the nobility and those that are born or commonly live in Paris, for in the provinces remote from the capital, men are of a better figure." While there is some truth in these criticisms, there is doubtless much insular prejudice. But Wolfe honestly tried to judge things on their merits. He grants at once that Paris has finer buildings than London, and after saying that "there are multitudes of extravagant customs that divert," he goes on to tell how the Parisians use umbrellas to protect them from the sun in hot weather and from snow and

rain in bad, adding "I wonder a practice so useful is not introduced into England, where there are such frequent showers, and especially in the country, where they can be expanded without any inconveniency." Comment on French politics in letters to foreign countries was likely to be followed by the disappearance of the missive in the post, as Wolfe explained. Now and again, however, he ventured near the line. The domestic troubles of France, he thought, were more serious than those of England. He realised the widespread unpopularity of the clergy and considered that they deserved it, asserting in fact that "the ecclesiastics have unluckily been the authors of almost all the mischief that has been done in Europe and in America since the first introduction of Christianity." He had no illusions as to the relations between France and Britain. "The English," he wrote, "are not favourites here; they can't help looking upon us as enemies, and I believe they are right." Yet he detected here and there an admiration of the English and their institutions, the seed of that "Anglomania" which was so extraordinary a feature of the years preceding the Revolution.

While in Paris Wolfe enjoyed remarkably good health. He needed no doctor, and a dentist whom he called in asserted that for English teeth his were very good, though he found two that "stood in need of his art and . . . stuffed lead where it was necessary." Still, after four or five months Wolfe grew tired of the place, and his soul hankered again after continental armies. In February he heard that a great part of the French army was to go into camp early in the summer, and Lord Albemarle suggested that Wolfe should write to the Duke of Cumberland and offer to accompany it as English military attaché during its period of training. Wolfe eagerly adopted the proposal, presumably with the support of Lord Albemarle, and for a moment he let his mind dwell on the possibility of seeing, not merely the French, but the Austrians and the Prussians, and "half the armies in Europe at

least," before the end of the summer. Yet his common sense told him that his offer was not likely to be accepted, and his misgivings were sound. For, even before an answer could have arrived, he received orders curtailing the leave which had been granted him. Wolfe grumbled, and mutinously declared that he would not hurry himself; but a second letter definitely destroyed hopes of continental travel and informed him that as the major of the Twentieth was very ill, his presence with the regiment was urgently needed. At the end of March, therefore, he journeyed home. His parents, it may be gathered, were much relieved; they had feared that he was going to spend a great deal more money and that he would join a foreign army. Their apprehensions on the latter point were probably groundless, for after reading Wolfe's letters from Paris one cannot doubt that only under inconceivably strong temptation would he have ceased to be an Englishman.

This visit to France seems to have had a good effect on Wolfe's health, spirits, opinions, and manners. At the same time, one cannot but wonder whether he made the best use of his opportunities. To avoid what is traditionally though mistakenly called Parisian life is no doubt commendable; but one would like Wolfe a little better if he had not always risen so early in the morning, if he had sometimes shirked the duties of the forenoon, and if he had now and then gone to bed after eleven. Perhaps the gratifying feeling that one's duty has been done is worth many other pleasures; but if Wolfe had been less bent on self-improvement he might have left Paris with a much more thorough knowledge of France and its people — and indeed of humanity at large — than he actually took with him.

Wolfe's stay at home was very brief, and on April 22 he was writing to his father from Glasgow. On the journey, after being "beat to pieces in the new close post-chaises," he had been compelled to resort to post-horses, but they were accustomed to be

held up by harness, and the equestrian skill acquired in Paris could not save Wolfe from two falls. He found the regiment in a deplorable plight, the major dead, "an ensign struck speechless with the palsy, and another that falls down in the most violent convulsions." Some of the officers were spitting blood. Others were in such pecuniary difficulties that they were selling their goods. Three weeks later things were no better. "We are all sick, officers and soldiers. I am among the best, and not quite well. In two days we lost the skin off our faces, and the third were shivering in great coats. Such are the bounties that Heaven has bestowed upon this people, and such the blessings of a northern latitude." Reading such lamentations, one is forcibly reminded that no regard was paid to a man's physical fitness when he was granted a commission. And as for the climate, that of Glasgow, whatever its drawbacks, is not severe; and robust men, though it might have depressed their minds, would not have complained so bitterly about its effect on their bodies. For the rest, Wolfe found Glasgow much as it had been four years before. "We have plays; we have concerts; we have balls, public and private; with dinners and suppers of the most execrable food upon earth, and wine that approaches to poison. . . . The men drink till they are excessively drunk. The ladies are cold to everything but a bagpipe; I wrong them, there is not one that does not melt away at the sound of an estate; there's the weak side of this soft sex." It is fair to add that when Wolfe penned this outburst, he was in an ironical mood, and that he goes on to poke fun at himself for having bought for seven pounds an aged horse that could scarcely carry him.

Wolfe's Paris visit had left him hard up, and he was obliged to ask his father for a loan of forty pounds. For some time after his return, his health was fairly good, but towards the end of the summer it became worse, and he began to despair of ever being well in the Scottish climate. Yet he was more cheerful than he

usually was in Scotland. He was beginning to respond to some of the attractions of the Highlands. A cousin had sent him a pointer, which Wolfe, who loved and understood dogs, greatly admired. From the same benefactor he received a home-made "fishing-rod and wheel," which he pronounced "inestimable." He had a salmon rod, given him by his uncle Walter; his mother had made him a present of flies; and he had guns of his own: so that he was looking forward to having some sport in the Highlands during the summer. As usual the regiment had to supply a detachment to help in the making of roads. It began work at Inveruglas, on the western shore of Loch Lomond, "where," according to Wolfe, "the country is beautifully rough and wild. There's great plenty of game, and the rivers are full of fish." Very few of his contemporaries would have used the word "beautifully" in such a context, nor would Wolfe himself four years earlier. On joining the road-makers he wrote, "A man in health might find a good deal of entertainment in fair weather, provided he has strength to climb up the mountains, and has keenness to pursue the game they produce." In his letters, however, he says nothing of the exploits of his rod and gun, and he was avowedly glad when the time came to leave his smoky hut for a Glasgow lodging.

Of Glasgow he saw little more. He had known for some time that his regiment was to go to England in the autumn. On September 9, he set out southward; by the 17th he was in Carlisle, and had left Scotland for ever. The weather on the march had been fine and warm. The men of the Twentieth were more tanned than those of the battalion from Minorca which relieved them. But even this propitious departure did not move Wolfe to take a kindly farewell of the Scots. He noted that the aspect of the country changed greatly as soon as one crossed the Border, though the soil was the same, and commented, "The English are clean and laborious, and the Scotch excessively dirty

and lazy, though far short, indeed, of what we found at a greater distance from the borders."

Wolfe's experience of Scotland had covered four-and-a-half years. In that time there had been great changes in his regiment. According to Wolfe himself, fifteen new officers had joined; though it is strange how little his letters tell about the new-comers or the men they replaced. On Wolfe, too, Scotland left a deep mark, physical and mental. It was unfortunate that at the age of twenty-two, after the strain of several campaigns, a man of such defective constitution should have been obliged to live in a climate that did not suit him. Of course it was not disease that in the end killed him; but his short life might have been much happier and his achievements even more brilliant if the years we have just reviewed had been spent under congenial conditions. Scotland destroyed whatever chances there had been of his outgrowing his youthful ailments and becoming a healthy man.

Wolfe's mind, however, had fared better than his body. His duties, while not conducive to fame or promotion, left him plenty of time to remedy the defects of his schooling. Where tutors were not to be had, he spent much of his leisure on reading; and at the end of his sojourn in Scotland, he was far better educated, in the true sense of the term, than most men of his rank and station. That his mind had been strengthened and broadened is clear from his letters, which gradually become less pretentious and didactic. The credit for this is perhaps due to France as much as to Scotland: at all events, the visit to Paris knocked many rough corners off him. His futile love-affair and his consequent disagreement with his parents also taught him much. While there is plenty to be said on his side, he recognised that in some ways he had made a fool of himself. Henceforth he displayed a much greater tactfulness in his relations with his parents. It was needed, for while Mrs. Wolfe might forgive, she

was not one to forget; and for years she was ready to fly into a rage at the least suspicion that her son was criticising or opposing her. It is plain from Wolfe's letters that he became skilful at placating her without yielding his point. That he had grown in knowledge of himself likewise becomes evident. Thus, in a letter written to his mother on June 29, 1753, he says: "That warmth of temper, which you so justly censure when it breaks out improperly, is what I depend upon to support me against the little attacks of my brethren and contemporaries, and that will find the way to a glorious, or at least a firm and manly end when I am of no further use to my friends or country, or when I can be serviceable by offering my life for either." To those who wish to understand Wolfe, this is an illuminating utterance. "Nobody," he goes on to say, "has perhaps more reason to be satisfied with his station and success in the world than myself, nobody can have better parents, and I have hitherto never wanted friends; but happiness (or ease, which is all we can pretend to) lies in the mind or nowhere. . . . Those tempers are very ticklish that may undergo a considerable change by any alteration of air, diet, or exercise, and this I often experience." And this he continued to illustrate to his life's end.

Professionally, Wolfe had good reason to be proud of himself. He had proved, young as he was, that he was fully capable of commanding a regiment. It is true that when he left Scotland he spoke pessimistically of the condition of the Twentieth. "The officers are loose and profligate, and the soldiers are very devils." Their dissolute habits had so undermined their physique that he does not believe they can endure the fatigue of a full-dress review. Yet in another mood he tells his friend Rickson that he could send him "some very good little soldiers." It appears, moreover, that his regiment was reputed to be "the best in the army, so far as drill and discipline go." That its excellence in these respects was mainly due to Wolfe's personal influence

may be inferred from the plight into which it fell during his absence in France. And, stern and exacting though he was, Wolfe seems to have been liked by both officers and men. He was popularly believed to have a kind heart; and it was not unusual for soldiers' wives to address him in such terms as the following: "COLLONEL, — Being a true Noble harted Pittiful gentlemen [*sic*] and Officer y^r worship will excuse these few lines concearning y^e husband of y^e undersign'd Serg^t White, who not from his own fault is not beehaving as Hee shoud towards mee and his Family although good and faithfull untill the middel of November last. — Anne White." Probably the men realised that Wolfe's strictness was not due to military pedantry, but was always directed to some valuable end. That his professional zeal had not destroyed his sense of proportion is clear from his attitude towards a change in the speed of the regiment's drill which had been introduced by Lord Bury, who considered it to be of great moment, while Wolfe spoke contemptuously of it as "not very material." No doubt, too, the execution of Wolfe's regimental Orders, some of which were quoted above, soon convinced the rank and file that he had their welfare at heart, even though they at first thought him fussy. It is much to be regretted that Wolfe's correspondence with Lord Bury has been lost, for in his letters to his parents and friends he rarely expressed any opinion as to the state and prospects of the Highlands. Though he never showed any sympathy with the Jacobite point of view, and seldom said anything good about Scotsmen of any class or party, his conduct was uniformly conciliatory and he left friendly memories behind him. One suggestion for the treatment of the Highlands he is known to have made, and a momentous one it was — that, notwithstanding the recent rebellion, Highlanders should again be recruited for the British army;¹ and it is possible, though not certain, that his

¹ The famous Black Watch (the 42nd. Foot) was in existence before 1745.

views influenced Pitt when he was considering the formation of new Highland regiments. The idea appears in a letter to Captain Rickson, dated June 9, 1751, and the reasons advanced in its favour are not wholly flattering to the Highlanders. "I should imagine," wrote Wolfe, referring to Rickson's duties in Nova Scotia, "that two or three independent Highland companies might be of use; they are hardy, intrepid, accustomed to a rough country, and no great mischief if they fall. How can you better employ a secret enemy than by making his end conducive to the common good? If this sentiment should take wind," he justly concludes, "what an execrable and bloody being should I be considered here in the midst of Popery and Jacobitism!"

Some writers have spoken of Wolfe as though he had already proved himself to be a military and political genius. He was obviously a first-rate commander of a regiment, a man of lofty professional standards, and a clever and sensible observer of such aspects of life as had fallen within his experience. That he was anything greater he had not as yet given reason to suppose. But what more can justly be demanded of a man of twenty-six?

CHAPTER VI

MILITARY ROUTINE: ENGLAND, 1753-1757

WHEN the Twentieth left Scotland in September, 1753, they marched in fine weather through Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire (where Wolfe thought the women much more handsome than those of Scotland), and then direct to Warwick. There Lord Bury occasioned what seems to have been an unnecessary delay by holding a review. Thence they were ordered to Reading, waiting there for a fortnight to be reviewed by the Duke of Cumberland, who fell sick and did not appear, much to the relief of the lieutenant-colonel. Marching eastward across Surrey and Kent, so that Wolfe was just able to spend two days at home, they reached Maidstone, where part of the regiment remained for the winter. The majority, with Wolfe, went on to Dover.

It was not long before Wolfe found that life could be uncomfortable and the weather chilly in the south of England as well as in Scotland. Dover Castle, which served as barracks for both officers and men, was in those days even more dilapidated than it is now, and while it doubtless looked romantic to the few with a taste for antiquity, it was not at all desirable as a residence. To a Scotsman it must be amusing to find Wolfe's letters as full of complaints as ever. In a letter written home immediately after his arrival, he describes himself as neither comfortable nor warm, but "in a soldier-like starving condition." He was lodged in a tower believed to have been built by the Romans, who, he thinks, should have chosen "a snugger situation to erect their fortress upon," and he wishes that the moderns, having destroyed so much of the stronghold, had completed their work.

Dover itself he calls a "dirty borough," asserting after further experience, "I am sure there is not in the King's dominions a more melancholy dreadful winter station."

Wolfe continued to grumble. He does not know how to pass the time. Seeking to relieve his depression by green tea, he finds there is none to be had. Social relaxation in the town is hardly possible; the officers cannot well leave the castle; for "if we dress, the wind disorders our curls; if we walk, we are in danger of our legs; if we ride, of our necks." The one advantage of their situation is that the adjacent cliffs afford "a ready deliverance down the perpendicular to such as are tired of their existence." Even Saxon ghosts of both sexes failed to comfort him.

All these lamentations, however, are expressed in a melodramatic style which in Wolfe's letters usually indicates that he was fairly happy. And he betrays the fact that even Dover had its compensations. He had plenty of time for reading. In fine weather, he rode on the downs towards Deal, a recreation which he might well find "very pleasant." He tried to shoot woodcock without much success, but managed to bag some birds which he calls quails. He actually confesses that he had been poaching, and had brought back a pheasant and some partridges. He was quite unrepentant, and railed at the game-laws in a way that probably shocked his father. It was an exceptionally cold winter; about the beginning of February there were three weeks of continuous frost; and a captain who had brought his pack of harriers from Maidstone, had to go back without a single day's hunting. Nevertheless, Wolfe seems to have been uncommonly well all the time.

"So much for that vile dungeon!" was, however, Wolfe's farewell to Dover Castle when in March, 1754, he and his men were ordered to leave it. Part of the regiment was sent to Bristol; the rest, under Wolfe, was halted at Guildford to be reviewed by Lord Bury. After this, Wolfe had six months' leave,

most of which he spent with his parents at Blackheath. In July he was invited to Freefolk, in Hampshire, the country residence of Sir John Mordaunt, uncle of Elizabeth Lawson, whose picture in the dining-room, he naïvely relates, "took away my stomach for two or three days." After a further stay at Blackheath, varied by one or two visits to Squerryes Court at Westerham, he set out to rejoin his regiment at Exeter towards the end of September. On the way he spent a few days at Bristol, where he used the opportunity to drink the waters, now almost forgotten but then of some repute.

At Exeter Wolfe was lodged in Rougemont castle. His quarters were more comfortable than those at Dover, but he did not like them. As for the city, it had "nothing in it either inviting or entertaining." The inhabitants were, as he put it, "of an ill species." When condemning them thus, he was doubtless thinking mainly of their political views. Just as Wolfe had not escaped severe weather when he left Scotland, so he had not seen the last of Jacobitism. On the whole, in fact, the people of Exeter were less loyal to the reigning house than those of Inverness; for when the regiment gave a ball on the king's birthday, though many Exeter ladies were present, only one male civilian accepted an invitation. Wolfe, however, had at once begun the usual process of conciliating the inhabitants. Even at the time of the ball just mentioned he was able to write, "I have danced the officers into the good graces of the Jacobite women hereabouts." Though Wolfe alleged that he did not care for dancing, his skill was much admired in Exeter. We are told that he was particular about his partners, whom he liked to be not only good dancers but also tall and graceful. His manners made a very happy impression on the civilians. He became friendly with the mayor, who had been specially prejudiced against the soldiers. With the clergy, so weighty an element in a cathedral city, he was on the best of terms. And of the citizens in general,

he was able to say after a month or two that they seemed to be "tolerably well disposed," though how long their good humour would last seemed to him quite uncertain.

Wolfe makes no criticism of the climate of Exeter, which presumably suited him. At Christmas he visited his parents, who were staying at Bath for Mrs. Wolfe's health. The winter journey on horseback appears to have done him no harm. When, however, a court-martial took him to Bristol a week or two later, his appearance seems to have shocked those who met him. Writing in an exceptionally gloomy vein to his mother, he said: "Folks are surprised to see the meagre, consumptive, decaying figure of the son, when the father and mother preserve such good looks; and people are not easily persuaded that I am one of the family. The campaigns of 1743, '4, '5, '6, and '7 stripped me of my bloom, and the winters in Scotland and at Dover have brought me almost to old age and infirmity, and this without any remarkable intemperance. A few years, more or less, are of very little consequence to the common run of men, and therefore I need not lament that I am perhaps something nearer to my end than others of my time." It is well to remember this passage, which shows that Wolfe had no delusions about his physical condition and was perhaps disposed to be unduly pessimistic about it. But he never let his misgivings paralyse his activity or weaken his ambitions. At this very time he was expecting an order to go to sea; for after the War of the Austrian Succession the Marines had been disbanded by an improvidently economical government, and in view of the strained relations between Britain and France, it was thought necessary to provide the fleet with the support of some regiments of the Line. The news made old General Wolfe very uneasy. The Cartagena expedition had given him a horror of service at sea and a distrust of the efficiency of the navy which was not wholly due to professional prejudice. Replying to hints that employment might perhaps be

found for him elsewhere, Wolfe argued that the navy had greatly improved since 1740, adding that things which were disagreeable to an elderly man would not necessarily annoy a young one. "I please myself," he continues, "that we are likely to do our country good service by going on board the fleet. The sickness that we feel at first will soon be over" — as regards Wolfe himself this was not true — "and I flatter myself, if occasion be, that we shall spur them on to their duty. . . . It is no time to think of what is convenient or agreeable; that service is certainly the best in which we can be most useful. For my part, I am determined never to give myself a moment's concern about the nature of the duty which his Majesty is pleased to order us upon. . . . It will be sufficient comfort to you two, as far as my person is concerned, at least it will be a reasonable consolation, to reflect that the Power which has hitherto preserved me may, if it be His pleasure, continue to do so; if not, that it is but a few days or a few years more or less, and that those who perish in their duty, and in the service of their country, die honourably." That Wolfe was sincere when he wrote thus there is no doubt, but the letter also illustrates the skill with which, at this time of his life, he handled his well-meaning but somewhat unsympathetic parents. What troubled him far more than the prospect of going to sea was the question of his promotion. Early in 1755, Lord Bury, who had lately become Earl of Albemarle by his father's death, was transferred to a cavalry regiment. There was much speculation as to his successor in command of the Twentieth. Wolfe did not expect to be appointed; he would not have objected if some elderly general or some noble lord had been given the colonelcy and treated it as a sinecure; but his self-esteem recoiled from the possibility that some man of his own rank and experience might, through political influence, be put in above him. His kinsmen and friends exerted themselves in his behalf and proposed some ingenious schemes, one of them being that Wolfe should enter

the service of the East India Company. But their efforts were fruitless and their plans unattractive to Wolfe, who in April had the mortification of hearing that the new commander was to be Lieutenant-Colonel Philip Honeywood, a rich and influential man with few other claims to distinction. "Col. Honeywood's being put to this regiment," wrote Wolfe, "is no compliment to me, as I shall explain to you hereafter," though no explanation seems to be required. "If the like civilities are done in time to come," he continues, "they will likewise be obliged to find out a new Lieut. Colonel; for as I have told my Lord Albemarle, I am resolved, I shan't serve one moment longer than I can do it with honour, if I should starve." That Wolfe submitted to the affront was probably due to his belief that he would soon be sent on active service.

In that expectation he was, however, mistaken. Already, indeed, he knew that the regiment was after all not to serve at sea, and when he heard of Honeywood's appointment the Twentieth had just been transferred to Winchester. For Wolfe the six months during which he was stationed there passed uneventfully. He found the place dull and melancholy, though the people were friendly and hospitable. During the summer he again suffered from his old skin trouble, which he had not mentioned in his correspondence for some years. Otherwise we hear little of his personal concerns. In August he went to Lyndhurst, in the New Forest, to see his father's sister, Anne Burcher, whom he rather patronisingly describes as "a very surprising old gentlewoman," her husband, who had mismanaged his pecuniary affairs, being summarily commended as having "the appearance of civility and good-breeding." The Burchers, in fact, were poor relations, who had been helped by the old General and were doubtless made to feel it. "They live," says Wolfe, "in a lonely miserable mansion in the forest, and all about has the look of indigence and decay. The poor gentlewoman expressed

herself in very grateful manner for the kindness and support that she has received from you, and seemed a good deal affected at the sight of me. You may believe I did not stay long there; but I have promised to see her again before we leave this place, if our march is not too sudden." Too sudden it of course was, to the relief, no doubt, of Mr. Burcher, if not of his wife.¹

Part of the Twentieth was quartered at Southampton, and Wolfe had often to be there. He thus saw and heard a good deal of the big fleet which was then lying at Spithead under Admiral Hawke, in continual expectation of sailing orders. What he learned of its condition excited his admiration, but did not prevent him from sharing the common belief that the French were planning an invasion. Should they succeed in landing, it would, he fears, go hard with the army. His doubts as to its efficiency seemed to him confirmed when at the end of August news came of the disaster to General Braddock's expedition in the woods near Fort Duquesne on the Ohio. He unjustly ascribed the catastrophe to the "cowardice and ill-behaviour of the men" rather than the shortcomings of their general. "I have," he proceeds, "but a very mean opinion of the Infantry in general. I know their discipline to be bad and their valour precarious. They are easily put into disorder, and hard to recover out of it. They frequently kill their officers through fear, and murder one another in their confusion. This shameful behaviour in Scotland, at Port L'Orient, at Melle, and upon many other less important occasions, clearly denoted the extreme ignorance of the officers, and the disobedient and dastardly spirit of the men." Did ever drink and debauchery, he asks, "operate more shamefully and violently upon the dirty inhabitants" of

¹ From the Burchers is descended Mr. A. O. Wolfe-Aylward, the present occupier of Quebec House, whose kindness and hospitality are familiar to many visitors to Westerham. His wife is the authoress of "The Pictorial Life of James Wolfe." with its admirable series of plates illustrating the hero's career.

England "under the denomination of soldiers?" "I am sorry to say," he adds more calmly, "that our method of training and instructing the troops is extremely defective, and tends to no good end. We are lazy in time of peace, and of course want vigilance and activity in war. Our military education is by far the worst in Europe, and all our concerns are treated with contempt or totally neglected. It will cost us very dear some time hence. I hope the day is at a distance, but I'm afraid it will come." When he penned this letter, Wolfe was obviously labouring under deep emotion, and it would be unwise to treat it as if he were speaking upon oath. But it does, though in exaggerated terms, indicate his sober opinion of the state of the army. That the discipline of the rank and file was defective his own experience was one day to prove; but he was unfair, though not necessarily insincere, in accusing them of lack of physical courage.²

During the summer of this year, Wolfe's nerves seem to have been out of order. In his letters home, which are longer than usual, he fusses monotonously about his mother's health. She was apparently suffering from sciatica, and ready to make the most of it, an attitude in which her son's verbose solicitude must have encouraged her; but it was a complaint which she had often had before, and her health seems not to have been worse than it generally was. In the autumn we find him offering financial advice to his father in view of the imminence of war: the General ought to avoid government securities, sell three or four thousand pounds of stock, and invest in land. He even goes so far as to tell the old man what his honour will demand of him in the event of an invasion. It is likely that Honeywood's appointment had been a greater blow to Wolfe than he admitted, and that his

² In a letter dated Dec. 2, 1755, Wolfe speaks of the army as possessing "some incomparable battalions," but the epithet is in any case ambiguous, and the context shows that he was using it sarcastically.

mental poise was disturbed for some time afterwards. At all events, he seldom appeared to less advantage than in his letters of this period.

In October, 1755, the Twentieth was despatched to yet another cathedral city — Canterbury. It is hardly necessary to say that Wolfe did not like the place, its streets being “the dirtiest of all streets.” There were other troops in the neighbourhood, for the authorities were apprehensive of a landing by the French on the Kentish coast. General Hawley, whose aide-de-camp Wolfe had been ten years before, was put in command of the force; “if there is an invasion,” said Wolfe, “they could not make use of a more unfit person.” The winter, however, passed quietly. Wolfe’s letters from Canterbury are exceptionally uninteresting. Apparently his ruffled temper was growing calmer.

The month of May, 1756, was a memorable one. On the 17th Great Britain formally declared war on France. This meant that the hostilities which had long been proceeding in India, North America, and the adjacent seas, and even of late in the Mediterranean, might now be extended to the soil and territorial waters of the belligerent countries. Failing to see that the fighting in Europe was really far less important than that overseas, historians have been accustomed to treat the war as beginning at this moment; and as peace was signed in 1763, it is called the Seven Years’ War. It is a very unfortunate misnomer. For the great issue at stake was maritime and colonial supremacy, and the events which determined that had been in progress long before May, 1756. It must not be supposed, however, that many Englishmen expected that the war would decide the long conflict among the European nations for predominance in America and the East. They worried about a French invasion, about the safety of British possessions in the Mediterranean, about French pretensions in Germany; what happened in India or America seemed of secondary importance; the prime minister of England

did not know that Annapolis was in Nova Scotia or that Cape Breton was an island, and assumed that the King shared his ignorance. As for the few who really understood the significance of the struggle, it was they who were the most dubious as to the outcome. They saw a corrupt and inefficient ministry in power; the army commanded little confidence; at the very outset the navy dashed all men's trust in it by failing to save Minorca from the French in circumstances which pointed to cowardice or treachery on the part of the responsible admiral. That the war so ingloriously begun was to go down in history as one of the most successful ever waged by Great Britain was due in no small measure to the man who, when it was declared, was lieutenant-colonel of an infantry regiment stationed in a cathedral city.

For Wolfe the beginning of the war brought nothing but disappointment. Four days after its formal commencement, instead of being sent on foreign service, he left Canterbury for Wiltshire. About the same time he heard that once again a colonel had been put in over his head. Honeywood, like his predecessors, had gone to the cavalry, and he was succeeded by William Kingsley, a good officer who took his duties seriously, but not a man in whose favour Wolfe could contentedly be passed over. He had, as we have seen, declared that he would resign if he were again subjected to such a slight; but to do so in time of war would justly have disgraced him, and though he felt bitter he continued to perform his duties with no diminution of zeal. His letters in the following months were full of comment on the war, though in an interesting passage he confessed that he never read the newspapers.

On reaching Wiltshire Wolfe was stationed at the little town of Devizes, where he lodged in a house, then an inn, which is still standing. He and his officers were active in recruiting, but his health was not good, though he does not specify his ailment. In the last week of July the Twentieth went into camp at Shroton near

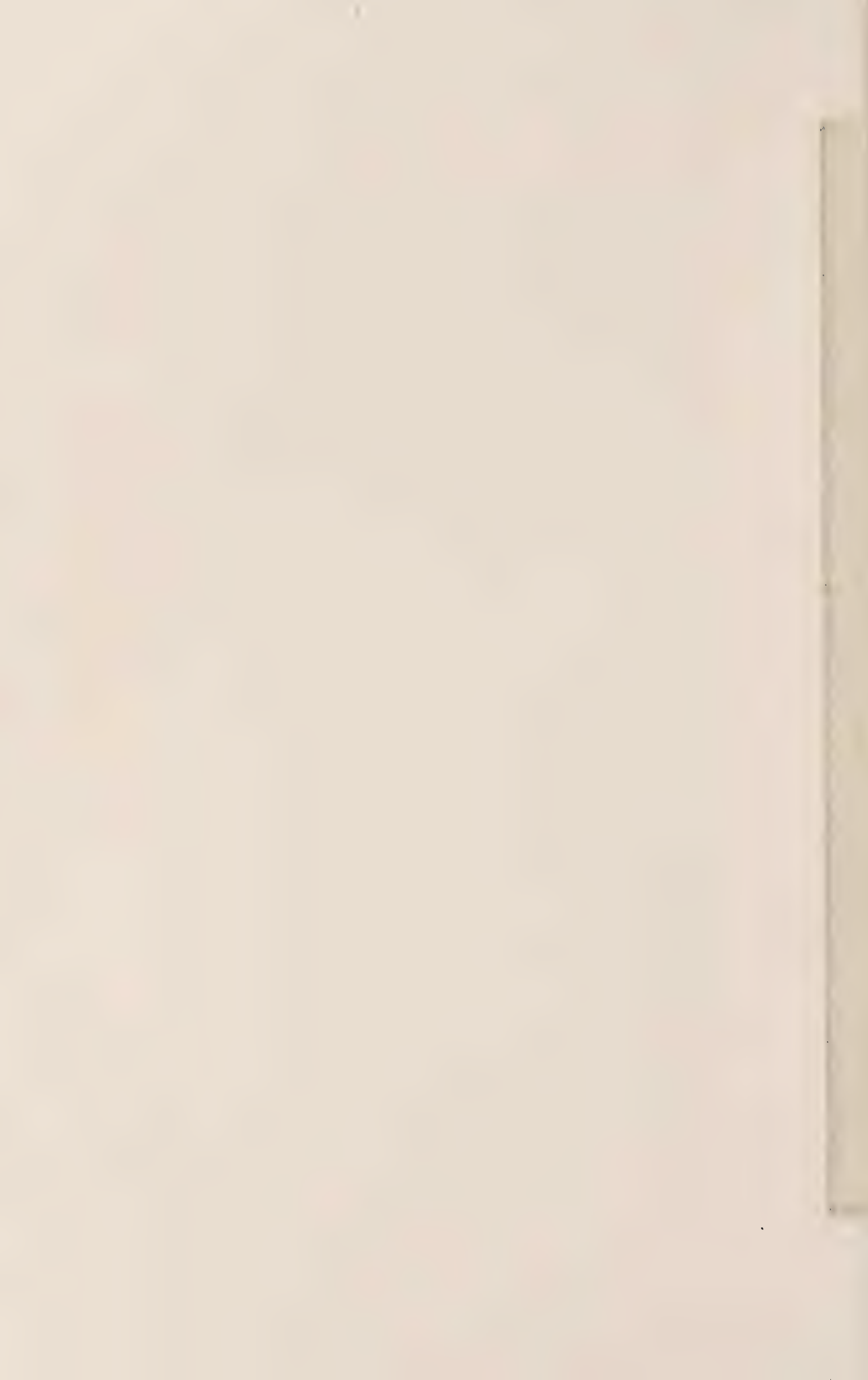
Blandford in Dorset, where a little army was assembled. Presumably the authorities feared an enemy descent on the Dorset coast, and the state of the neighbouring country must have been something like that pictured so vividly in *The Trumpet-Major* and other tales by Thomas Hardy, though these of course refer to a crisis of fifty years later. For once Wolfe approved of his quarters. The camp stood on high ground, and was a little too windy; but he thought it "a very wholesome and very pleasant dry spot," and declared, "This sort of life generally agrees very well with me, and I am much better in health, since I came into the open air." His colonel was present and Wolfe liked him, on both personal and professional grounds; but of the troops he had but a mean opinion. At the end of August there was a review of the whole force on Blandford Downs, "to the great entertainment of the ignorant spectators" — readers of Hardy can imagine what they said — but, according to Wolfe's judgment, the performance did not deserve "even their approbation."

In September Wolfe had short leave, which he spent at home. Then he went back to camp, where at the middle of October only the Twentieth and another battalion were left, "up to our knees in dirt, while our comrades are very snug in their quarters." Immediately afterwards he was ordered to take six companies to Gloucestershire to support the civil authorities, who were alarmed by disorder among the weavers. To those who think that strikes in war-time are a merely modern phenomenon, it will be surprising to learn that the cloth-weavers of the Cotswolds were refusing to work on the ground that the masters had "beat down their wages too low to live upon," a complaint which Wolfe believed to be just. Wolfe apparently thought his presence unnecessary. On reaching Chipping Sodbury he wrote, "I believe there never was a more harmless piece of business, for I have men enough to beat the mob of all England collected. I hope it will turn out a good recruiting party, for the people are so op-



VI. "Higher than before! Our General begins his day"

A caricature of Wolfe by General Townshend. From the pen and ink drawing in the possession of Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor.



pressed, so poor and wretched, that they will perhaps hazard a knock on the pate for bread and clothes, and turn soldiers through mere necessity." He was afraid that the magistrates might call upon his services, for some of the weavers had seized the tools and broken the looms of those of their fellows who wished to go on working. Luckily, no shooting was required; but the troubles subsided so slowly that Wolfe was kept chafing in Gloucestershire all winter. During November and part of December he was at Stroud, and thereafter at Cirencester; it was very dull, with no amusements save walking or riding.

What kept up his spirits was the prospect of speedy release. His friends had been working for him, and in the previous summer he had come under the notice of the Duke of Bedford, now Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. In the winter the posts of Barrackmaster-General and Quartermaster-General in Ireland fell vacant, and the duke offered both to Wolfe, though he soon changed his mind so far as to bestow the former office on someone else. Wolfe was not much attracted; he would have preferred service on the Continent; but the post of Irish Quartermaster-General was a dignified and remunerative one, and he could not afford to offend the Duke. He was resolved, however, that he would not retain it unless he was given the rank of colonel, which previous holders of it had customarily held. While the necessary wires were being pulled he accepted Bedford's offer, but after some months the colonelcy was refused by the King, acting, so Wolfe understood, on the advice of the Duke of Cumberland, who said that he was too young.

Meanwhile, Wolfe had been to London, where in March he was formally invested with his Irish appointment. Returning thence to the west of England, he found the second battalion of the Twentieth, which he had recruited in the previous year, "in very good condition, healthy and forward in their exercise, and the soberest collection of young Englishmen that I ever saw" —

unwonted praise from so critical a pen. To the present generation it is of interest to note that this admirable battalion had been raised since the declaration of war, and at a time when the country was popularly believed to be in grave danger. In July the Twentieth was again sent to a camp in Dorset, this time at Bradford Heath, near Dorchester. Wolfe was probably there when he heard that he was not to be made a colonel. What he would have done we cannot tell. He had not yet entered on his duties in Ireland, so that if he meant to resign his new post, now was the time to do it. Still, such a course might well annoy the Duke of Bedford, whose friendship was the more to be valued since it looked as though Wolfe had lost the favour of the Duke of Cumberland. But Wolfe's perplexity was ended by the intervention of a greater man than any duke. William Pitt appointed him Quartermaster-General in the expedition then fitting out to capture Rochefort.

Wolfe was thirty years old. He had a little more than two years of life — crowded and glorious — before him. Had he died at this moment, few would have mourned him, and his name would soon have been forgotten. But the character which supported him through the vicissitudes of the rest of his career, was now formed; the skill and knowledge that were to lead him from one success to another had for the most part been acquired. It is well therefore at this point to pause and look more closely at this young soldier who had gained the confidence of so good a judge of men as Pitt.

Wolfe's appearance had not changed much since he attained manhood. Despite his care of his health, he was still thin, and, for all his dancing-lessons at Paris, still ungainly. No one ever claimed that he was handsome. There is, however, a consensus of opinion that when he was conversing or excited his face became very pleasing, and his winning smile was remembered by many who had seen him for only a few minutes. In the autumn

of 1755 he gave up wearing a wig, and no doubt his red hair looked comical to his contemporaries. It is not true, however, that he never used a wig thereafter; in his last years he sometimes wore one, sometimes not. He was never a dandy, but he was not slovenly in his dress, which is frequently mentioned in his letters to his mother.

Though Wolfe's references to his health became fewer after his departure from Scotland, there is reason to think that it was not materially improved. He was seldom compelled to go off duty, and, to judge from his correspondence, he did not often consult a doctor. But Dr. Clarence Webster, whose knowledge of medicine equals his interest in Wolfe, infers from his symptoms that in the last years of his life he was suffering from tuberculosis of the kidneys, a disease both painful and incurable. If the diagnosis is correct — and Dr. Webster has strong grounds for it — Wolfe was probably a doomed man at the time when he attracted Pitt's notice. As yet, however, the disorder had not made much headway; at any rate, Wolfe makes no allusion at this time to its characteristic symptoms. Nevertheless, as we have seen, he had accustomed himself to the idea that his life would be short. That he was able, with his poor physique and imperfect health, to endure so much exertion and accomplish so much work was due in part to his capacity for sleep. "Nothing wakes me," he wrote, after sleeping soundly through an alarming thunderstorm. Yet he considered that this gave cause for concern, sound sleep, according to him, being "the mark of an inactive mind."

Of Wolfe's disposition and habits some notion may be gathered from the foregoing narrative. Throughout his later life he kept his resolution never to repeat the excesses of which he had been guilty at the time of the quarrel with his parents about Elizabeth Lawson. His amusements were few and simple. About racing he cared little, and though he thought cards "rea-

sonable and very innocent instruments of diversion," he was not "particularly fond" of them. He could play chess, but not, it seems, very well. Out-of-doors his favourite recreation was shooting, notwithstanding his indifferent eye. He hunted, though without much enthusiasm; riding, in fact, was to him a healthful exercise rather than a pleasure. Of his horses he took great care, but he does not seem to have had much affection for them. It was otherwise with his dogs, which became one of the chief interests of his life. In his later years he generally possessed five or six; some he had with him, whenever that was possible; the rest were in the charge of his parents at Blackheath, and letter after letter betrays their master's concern for their welfare. One of the numerous passages about them may be quoted. It occurs in a letter to his mother, written from Winchester in April, 1755.

Lord Albemarle has desired to have one of Flurry's puppies; I have told him to take his choice, and that which he pitches upon will be delivered upon demand; I am many dogs in his debt, and owe him this return. . . .

I am afraid the cook gives the dogs too much meat; flesh is a very dangerous food for dogs, and spoils their noses. While Ball eats his dinner, the coachman, or one of the servants might lock up the spaniels, and give them a little pot liquor and bread; or milk, or oatmeal and water: servants think that a dog is never well fed, unless he gets scraps of salt beef, pork, etc. — whereas these strong victuals are certain destruction; and they should never want water. I know you like these poor creatures, otherwise I wouldn't venture to trouble you with so much upon the subject.

Wolfe seems to have been most fond of sporting dogs, particularly spaniels and pointers. In reading his correspondence, one is struck by the fact that in his time, as in all previous ages, a sick dog was much more likely to receive rational treatment than a sick human being.

As time went on, Wolfe grew less pompous and sententious;

but to the end he was unpleasantly censorious and over free with advice. He seems to have been one of those men who are commonly on better terms with their superiors and inferiors in social status than with those of their own class. He was indeed no toady, and he felt no respect for title and not much for wealth; but in his dealings with those above him, he usually displayed a discreet deference which often contrasted strongly with his private opinion of them. With his men, as we have seen, he was popular; his interest in the two sons of his old nurse was touching; and only a really kind-hearted man would have won the trust which his soldiers' wives displayed in him. Indeed, he was widely known as "the soldier's friend." But with his own kind his relations were not so happy. He no doubt behaved to his uncle and aunt Burcher less offensively than he afterwards spoke of them; but he apparently held himself somewhat aloof from the officers of his regiment, and he had few intimate friends. This was of course not wholly his own fault. The hard-riding, deep-drinking, and high-playing officers of the time cannot have felt quite at home with a comrade so serious, learned, and temperate as Wolfe. Jealousy of his rapid promotion must also have held many at a distance. Still, there is no question that some who sympathised with his zeal and would gladly have been friendly were repelled by his impetuous temper and capricious tongue.

These defects have been repeatedly illustrated above. Of some of them Wolfe, as we have seen, was conscious. One or two particularly frank passages may be added to those already quoted in this context. Writing from Stroud to his mother on November 13, 1756, concerning some remonstrance which one of his letters had drawn from her, he says: "My temper is much too warm, and sudden resentment forces out expressions, and even actions, that are neither justifiable nor excusable; and, perhaps, I do not correct that natural heat so much as I ought to do. But

you must have observed that people are apt to resent what they, at first view, and often inadvisedly, take for injuries, with more than common quickness, when they come from an unsuspected quarter. . . . I have that cursed disposition of mind (the worst quality that can seize the heart of man, and the devil's great assistant), that when I once know that people have entertained a very ill opinion, I imagine they never change. From whence one passes easily to an indifference about them, and then to dislike; and though I flatter myself that I have the seeds of justice strong enough to keep me from doing wrong, even to an enemy, yet there lurks a hidden poison in the heart that is difficult to root out. . . . It is my misfortune to catch fire on a sudden, to answer letters the moment I receive them, when they touch me sensibly, and to suffer passion to dictate my expression more than reason. . . ." Less than a month later, Wolfe returns to the subject in the following terms: "This intemperance of mind seems to increase with my years, and to [gain] ground upon my judgment. I attribute it in some measure to the nature of my employment as well as to the condition of my blood, being everlasting chagrined with the ill actions of the people about me, and in the constant exercise of power to punish and rebuke. I pass so much of my time at quarters, and am so intent upon having everything done in its proper way, that those aids which an equality in society, the conversation of women, and the wholesome advice of friends are known to give to minds of my cast, are totally cut off from me and denied; and if I was to serve two or three years in America, I make no doubt but that I should be distinguished by a peculiar fierceness of temper suited to the nature of that war." There is some exaggeration in these confessions, but Wolfe really was touchy and explosive. Very closely connected with this characteristic were the sudden changes of mind which often perplexed and annoyed his acquaintances. He talked big of what he would do if some insig-

nificant man were made colonel of the Twentieth or if that rank were denied him when he became Quartermaster-General of Ireland: but when the conditions were fulfilled, he did nothing. It is true that circumstances had changed, and that to do nothing was the wisest course; but this only makes clearer the folly of Wolfe's previous threats. Again, when war with France became imminent he was free with advice to his parents as to the management of their property: his father should avoid government stock and buy land. But at the beginning of 1757, in a further discourse on his parents' duty to their country, he urges his father to invest in government lotteries "and all schemes for raising money," even though the risk be great. He might even lend £3000 or £4000 to the government without interest, or perhaps give it, "since it is the savings of his salaries and the reward of his services." It is of course true that Wolfe stood to lose by any financial misfortune that befell the General; still, it must in any case have been annoying to the old man to receive instruction from his son on his private concerns, and infuriating when the instructor began to contradict himself. Subsequent complaints that Wolfe's words and actions were inconsistent with each other, and that he did not know his own mind from one day to the next, derive some colour from such instances of capricious behaviour. No doubt his receptive mind adapted itself to new conditions or fresh knowledge before duller faculties were aware that there was any reason for change. It was unfortunate, nevertheless, that his impetuous tongue often led him to make predictions or pass judgment on the strength of incomplete information; for when he was afterwards constrained to alter his opinions, he was inevitably condemned as untrustworthy and shallow-minded.

It must not be supposed, however, that Wolfe was a mere chatterer; his mind was too well stocked for that. His efforts to remedy the defects of his education have already been noticed.

Reading occupied a great part of his leisure. Most of the books he read were, it seems, on military subjects; but his interest in his profession took him far afield, as will be gathered from the following passage in a letter of advice to a would-be officer. Besides technical treatises, let him read, says Wolfe, "of the ancients, Vegetius, Cæsar, Thucydides, Xenophon's *Life of Cyrus*, and *Retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks*. I do not mention Polybius, because the *Commentaries* [previously recommended] and the *History* naturally go together. Of the later days *Davila*,³ Guicciardini,⁴ Strada,⁵ and the *Memoirs of the Duc de Sully*.⁶ There is abundance of military knowledge to be picked out of the lives of Gustavus Adolphus, and Charles XII, King of Sweden, and of Zisca the Bohemian;⁷ and if a tolerable account could be got of the exploits of Scanderbeg,⁸ it would be inestimable; for he excels all the officers, ancient and modern, in the conduct of a small defensive army. I met with him in the Turkish History, but nowhere else. The *Life of Sertorius*, too, contains many fine things in this way." The Greek authors named above, and probably the Italians, Wolfe read in translation. He had a special admiration for Thucydides, whom he calls the soldier's historian, and he was not above taking tactical hints from the pages of Xenophon. He did not, however, limit himself to works which had a direct relation to his calling. Two years after the publication of that classic of political science, Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*, he had read the book and was recommending it to a friend. Allusions in his letters testify to a good knowledge of Shakespeare, and there is one reference to Milton, not a

³ Italian historian, 1576-1631: wrote a History of the Wars of Religion in France.

⁴ Italian historian, 1482-1540, who wrote on Italy in his own time.

⁵ Italian historian, 1572-1649, who wrote on the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain.

⁶ The famous minister of Henry IV of France.

⁷ The great Hussite general, who died in 1424.

⁸ The national hero of the Albanians. He lived from 1403 to 1467.

popular poet at the time. On his last expedition he had with him a copy of Gray's *Elegy*, published in 1751; it is lavishly underlined, there are numerous marginal comments in his handwriting scattered about its pages, while a very famous anecdote, to be considered in its place, bears witness to his admiration of the poem. Attempts have been made to prove that Wolfe tried to write verse himself; but the so-called poems ascribed to him are so execrable that one gladly rejects the very slender evidence that he had anything to do with them. For music, notwithstanding his lessons on the flute, he apparently cared little; in Paris he preferred the play to the opera. He was frank about his indifference to the plastic arts. "I know nothing," he wrote in 1754, "more entertaining than a collection of well-looking men uniformly clad, and performing their exercise with grace and order. I should go further, — my curiosity would carry me to all parts of the world, to be a spectator at these martial sights, and to see the various produce of different climates and the regulations of different armies. Fleets and fortifications too are objects that would attract me as strongly as architecture, painting, and the gentler arts."

Here speaks the genuine Wolfe out of the abundance of his heart. For whatever his passions, his interests, his tastes, all were subordinated to his abiding enthusiasm for his profession. Kindly though he was by nature, he would punish breaches of discipline without mercy, he would record with satisfaction a great slaughter of the enemy, he would advise the massacre of a Highland clan, he would burn villages, he would destroy the nets and boats of poor fishermen: he would, in a word, do anything that the laws of war permitted. Frightfulness for its own sake he never, indeed, countenanced. He played the game according to the recognised rules, but he would use every resource and take every advantage that those rules allowed him. Where they enjoined courtesy and forbearance, he was polite and merciful;

in matters outside their sphere, he was always chivalrous and conciliatory. But, though he was a severe critic of himself, he would have been unmoved by the blame which has been laid upon him for certain harsh actions which he was to commit in America and he would have despised the efforts of his apologists to palliate them.

This professional zeal was famous in the army before he did anything to catch the eye of the public. The Twentieth had maintained its reputation of being the best drilled and disciplined regiment in Great Britain. Writing of his selection as Quartermaster-General in the Rochefort expedition, Horace Walpole described him as "a young officer who had contracted reputation from his intelligence of discipline, and from the perfection to which he brought his own regiment." Wolfe's views on drill were not altogether identical with those usually held by officers of his time. It was not that he undervalued the exercises of the parade-ground, but he always kept in mind the end for which they were designed — the winning of battles. We have noticed his contempt for Lord Bury's pedantry, and when, as the Quebec expedition was about to leave Louisbourg, certain regimental commanders apologised because their men had not had time to learn a new system of drill, "Poh! Poh!" he exclaimed, "new exercise — new fiddlestick! if they are otherwise well-disciplined and will fight, that's all I require of them." What specially distinguished Wolfe as a trainer of soldiers was the attention he gave to musketry. Writing to Rickson in 1755, he says: "We fire bullets continually . . . and let me recommend the practice, you'll soon find the advantage of it. Marksmen are nowhere so necessary as in a mountainous country [Rickson was in Scotland]; besides, firing balls at objects teaches the soldiers to level incomparably, makes the recruits steady, and removes the foolish apprehension that seizes young soldiers when they first load their arms with bullets. We fire, first singly, then by files,

1, 2, 3, or more, then by ranks, and lastly by platoons; and the soldiers see the effects of their shot especially at a mark, or upon water. We shoot obliquely, and in different situations of ground, from heights downwards, and contrarywise. I use the freedom to mention this to you, not as one prescribing to another, but to a friend who may accept or reject; and because, possibly it may not have been thought of by your commander, and I have experience of its great utility." This is a passage of much value to all who wish to reach a just estimate of Wolfe. The last sentence deserves particular attention. How thoroughly Wolfe's unconventionality was justified the last moments of his life were to show.

After referring to Wolfe in the terms quoted above, Horace Walpole goes on to say, "The world could not expect more of him than he thought himself capable of performing. He looked upon danger as the favourable moment that would call forth his talents." Wolfe, indeed, has often been blamed for possessing a good conceit of himself. What he really thought of his own abilities is probably expressed in the following extract from a letter written to his mother from Canterbury in November, 1755. Mrs. Wolfe had evidently been hearing flattering reports of her son and had passed them on. "The officers of the army in general are persons of so little application to business, and have been so ill educated, that it must not surprise you to hear that a man of common industry is in repute amongst them. I reckon it as a very great misfortune to this country that I your son, who have I know but a very moderate capacity, and a certain degree of diligence a little above the ordinary run, should be thought, as I generally am, one of the best officers of my rank in the service. I am not at all vain of the distinction, the comparison would do a man of genius very little honour, and does not illustrate me by any means; and the consequence will be very fatal to me in the end; for as I rise in rank, people will expect some con-

siderable performances, and I shall be induced in support of an ill-got reputation, to be lavish of my life, and shall probably meet that fate which is the ordinary effects of such a conduct." It needed not the desire to impose on his fellow-countrymen to induce Wolfe to run risks; but he was certainly sincere in what he said about his fellow-officers, who, from all that we know of them, deserved it. Still, Wolfe had a fairly good opinion of his own merits and, as we shall see, felt no diffidence in pressing his views on his superiors. He has even been accused of melodramatic bragging; the story will be considered later; it is well, in any case, to recognise that the strong prejudice against boasting which now exists among Englishmen is of comparatively recent growth; it is not found in the same intensity in other nations; and many great men, both in England and elsewhere, have had a strong sense of their own abilities and been ready to talk about them. A braggart is not necessarily either a knave, a fool, or a coward.

That Wolfe's judgment of himself in comparison with other officers was widely accepted is strikingly proved by the frequency with which he was asked to give advice to boys entering the service. One or two of his replies have become famous, and they reveal so much about Wolfe himself that they are worth quoting at some length. Thus, in July, 1756, he wrote to Thomas Townshend, afterwards Lord Sydney, who had consulted him about his younger brother Henry, a would-be officer. He begins with a reference to a previous letter of the same kind.

I don't recollect what it was that I recommended to Mr. Cornwallis's nephew: it might be the Comte de Turpin's book,⁹ which is certainly worth looking into, as it contains a good deal of plain practice. Your brother, no doubt, is master of the Latin and French languages, and has some knowledge of the mathematics; without this

⁹ Turpin de Crissé: *Essai sur L'Art de la Guerre*. Wolfe's copy, in two handsomely bound volumes, is now in the Northcliffe Collection in the Canadian Archives at Ottawa.

last he can never become acquainted with one considerable branch of our business, the constructions of fortifications and the attack and defence of places; and I would advise him by all means to give up a year or two of his time now while he is young, if he has not already done it, to the study of the mathematics, because it will greatly facilitate his progress in military matters.

Wolfe goes on to mention a number of books that the young man will find valuable. He puts in the forefront the "King of Prussia's Regulations for his Horse and Foot," which, he thinks, are particularly useful for regimental officers. Frederick the Great, indeed, he elsewhere calls "the first Soldier of this Age and our Master in the Art of War." Among the other works recommended are the memoirs of three generals; and the rest of the purely military books are all by Frenchmen, except the famous treatise of Vegetius on the Roman army. Wolfe, however, did not wish to limit his disciple to purely technical treatises. He was urged, in a passage already quoted, to read military history, both classical and modern, the lives of certain celebrated generals, and one or two political histories. Wolfe adds that there is a little text-book, called *Traité de la Petite Guerre*, "that your brother should take in his pocket when he goes upon out-duty and detachments." "I believe," Wolfe discreetly continues, "Mr. Townshend will think this catalogue long enough; and if he has patience to read and a desire to apply . . . the knowledge contained in them [*sic*], there is wherewithal to make him a very considerable person in his profession, and of course very useful and serviceable to his country. In general, the lives of all great commanders, and all good histories of warlike nations, will be instructive, and lead him naturally to endeavour to imitate what he must necessarily approve of." Unless young officers take more pains to fit themselves for their duties, "we must sink under the superior abilities and indefatigable industry of our restless neighbour." This letter enables us to understand

Wolfe's meaning when, on another occasion, he said, "In the army, as well as in other professions, learning is absolutely necessary." Lest, however, it might be suspected that Wolfe over-emphasised the theoretical side of his calling, some passages may be quoted from another letter, written by Wolfe on his own initiative to a young subaltern, Hugh Lord, nephew of his friend Rickson:

I make no doubt but you have entirely laid aside the boy and all boyish amusements, and have considered yourself as a young man going into a manly profession, where you must be answerable for your own conduct; your character in life must be that of a soldier and a gentleman; the first is to be acquired by application and attendance on your duty; the second by adhering most strictly to the dictates of honour, and the rules of good breeding; to be most particular in each of these points when you join your Regiment; if there are any officers' guard mounted, be sure constantly to attend the parade, observe carefully the manner of the officers taking their posts, the exercise of their esponton, etc.; when the guard is marched off from the parade, attend it to the place of relief, and observe the manner and form of relieving, and when you return to your chamber (which should be as soon as you could, lest what you saw slip out of your memory), consult Bland's *Military Discipline*¹ on that head. . . . When off duty get a serjt or corporal . . . to teach you the exercise of the firelock, which I beg of you to make yourself as much master of as if you were a simple soldier, the exact and nice knowledge of this will readily bring you to understand all other parts of your duty, make you a proper judge of the performance of the men, and qualify you for the post of an adjutant, and in time many other employments of credit.

When you are posted to your company, take care that the sergeants or corporals constantly bring you the orders; treat those officers with kindness, but keep them at a distance, so will you be beloved and respected by them. Read your orders with attention, and if anything in particular concerns yourself, put it down in your

¹ Major-General Humphrey Bland's *Treatise of Military Discipline* was much admired by Wolfe. An annotated copy of the work, which he presented to his friend William De Laune, is now in the possession of Dr. J. C. Webster.

memorandum book, which I would have you constantly [*sic*] in your pocket ready for any remarks. Be sure to attend constantly morning and evening the roll calling of the company; watch carefully the absentees, and enquire into reasons for their being so; and particularly be watchful they do not endeavour to impose on you sham excuses, which they are apt to do with young officers. . . .

From the tactics of the Carduchi, as described by Xenophon, to the mechanism of Brown Bess, as expounded by a British corporal, there was nothing that came amiss to Wolfe's professional appetite. Everything that contributed to the growth of an officer was readily digested. And so William Pitt had at his service a potential major-general whose rare knowledge of "facts historical" and "matters mathematical" did not preclude an acquaintance with the minutest details of military routine, who knew "precisely what was meant by commissariat," and had read widely and pondered deeply on the hardest problems of tactics and strategy.

CHAPTER VII

SUCCESS IN FAILURE: ROCHEFORT, 1757

WHEN, in July 1757, Wolfe was chosen to join the Rochefort expedition, it was fourteen months since the Seven Years' War had formally begun. So far everything had gone ill for Britain. On the Continent the French had invaded Germany, where the Duke of Cumberland, with a heterogenous army containing but few British troops, was confronting them with gloomy prospects — indeed, his thorough defeat at Hastenbeck occurred towards the end of this very month. Meanwhile, Britain's sole ally, Frederick the Great, after one or two successes against the Austrians, found himself forced back and threatened with ruin by a converging advance of French from the west, Austrians from the south, and Russians from the east. At sea the French had gained command of the Mediterranean and captured Minorca; and it gave the British small comfort to shoot the delinquent admiral, Byng, an act which had the hearty approval of Wolfe. Elsewhere the navy, though apparently energetic, had done little beyond capturing French merchantmen. In India, British prestige had suffered by the loss of Fort William, with its sequel, the tragedy of the Black Hole of Calcutta. In America, the Marquis de Montcalm had destroyed Oswego and thereby deprived the British of their footing on the shores of Lake Ontario. The disasters abroad intensified the prevailing demoralisation at home. So far from trying to gain the initiative, the people of England were trembling in expectation of an invasion. The ministry in power when war broke out, headed as it was by the corrupt and ignorant Duke of Newcastle, commanded the confidence of no one. Yet,

so strong in Parliament was the duke, a past master in all the tricks of bribery and jobbery, that his government might have survived every disgrace had there not been in Pitt a man trusted by the people at large, for popular rage at the loss of Minorca was inflamed by the general conviction that if Pitt had been in office no such thing could have occurred. Newcastle and his colleagues, fearing for their personal safety, yielded; and in November, 1756, the king, much against his will, appointed Pitt Secretary of State in a Cabinet with a figure-head Prime Minister, the Duke of Devonshire. Vigour forthwith took the place of inactivity. The late government had hired foreign mercenaries to defend England; Pitt sent them back to Germany, good troops though many of them were. He reorganised and increased the militia, he strengthened the British forces in America, and he authorised the recruiting of new regiments of Highlanders, measures which confirmed the public in their admiration for him, though of course their effects could not be immediately felt. But Parliament was almost independent of public opinion, and in Parliament the arts of Newcastle soon began to prevail against the upright but arrogant Pitt. So insecure did his position become that in April the king was emboldened to dismiss him, only to find that no one was strong enough to form a government without him. For nearly three months, at a time of grave national danger, there was no ministry. At last circumstances forced the extremes to meet, and Pitt and Newcastle, much as they hated each other, consented to act as fellow-ministers. That they agreed to co-operate can hardly be said; for it was arranged that Newcastle as Prime Minister should control patronage, pull wires, and manage Parliament, while Pitt, once more Secretary of State, should take charge of foreign affairs and the war. It tells much of both men that the arrangement worked extremely well. The unholy alliance lasted for four years; and the ministry is remembered as one of the most

brilliant and successful in English history. It was as popular in the country as it was secure in Parliament.

Pitt is one of those men whose influence and achievements are very hard to explain. His knowledge was neither wide nor deep. His administrative capacity was small. He was irritable in temper and overbearing in manner. His behaviour was often theatrical, his speech bombastic. But his many defects were overshadowed by a few surpassing merits. He was utterly indifferent to the lower forms of corruption; only ambition or patriotism could induce him, as in 1757, to bate a jot of his lofty principles. He was a magnificent orator, and the technical defects of his rhetoric seldom impaired his power over his hearers — a power perhaps unparalleled in the history of the English Parliament. Though probably incapable of organising an expedition or conducting a campaign, he had a firm grasp of a few of the vital principles of strategy. He was, too, a good judge of men, though his gifts in this respect have commonly been exaggerated; it was his disregard of birth or seniority, rather than any exceptional discernment, that brought to the front during his ministry a surprising number of capable leaders. But perhaps his most notable quality was a power of inspiring men with his own enthusiasm and imbuing them with a confidence in themselves that shrank from no hazard or difficulty. "No one ever entered his closet who did not come out of it a better man," said one who knew him well. Pitt's success in fact was a triumph of sheer personality. He was like a blast of wind through the exhausted atmosphere of convention and cynicism in which the political and social life of England had long languished.

Pitt cared little about continental affairs in themselves. To him the conflict was one for colonial supremacy. He would involve Britain in European warfare only in so far as her participation would serve to attract French resources away from the colonies and the sea. Frederick the Great must be subsidised, for it

was essential that he should keep up his fight against France and her allies; German mercenaries, though not to be tolerated in England, might be hired to defend British interests in central Europe; but, while it was advisable to send some English soldiers thither, their numbers must be kept as low as appearances permitted. There remained at Pitt's disposal the fleet and the greater part of the army. Pitt, like all wise strategists, wanted to assume the offensive. The nation must be shaken out of its timidity; the rulers of the Continent should be impressed by some bold stroke. Pitt probably thought that the reinforcements sent to America would be enough to turn the tide there. A successful attack on France herself would have a resounding moral effect, apart from the material damage it might do. It was suggested to Pitt that the naval arsenal of Rochefort, near the mouth of the Charente, would be a good objective. It was ill fortified, its capture would make possible the destruction of vast quantities of material of war, an invasion at that point would draw many French troops from distant Germany, and such a blow would greatly demoralise the French people. It was not good strategy to use a big force on an enterprise that could hardly have decisive results; but in itself the project was quite feasible. The chief risk of failure lay in the standing jealousy between navy and army, a jealousy which had ruined the Cartagena enterprise and was to frustrate many another amphibious operation. At the very outset, indeed, Lord Anson, who was First Lord of the Admiralty, told Pitt that the necessary transports could not possibly be got ready by the day which the minister named. The order was peremptorily repeated, with a hint, it is said, that in the event of unpunctuality, Pitt would recommend Anson's impeachment by the House of Commons. The Admiralty thereafter showed satisfactory zeal; but if the great Pitt had to deal so summarily with Anson, an able and public-spirited man, what was likely to happen when lesser minds were

required to co-operate? However, once Anson's objections had been silenced, the preparations progressed with great speed. Thousands of seamen were recruited, many of them by impressment; provisions for six months were purchased; ten boats were allotted to each transport, that the troops might be disembarked quickly; and the army was furnished with scaling ladders which thirty men could climb abreast. Little criticism could be passed on the force's equipment. About the object of the expedition the strictest secrecy was observed. Wolfe himself did not know where he was going until he had been at sea for several days, and the French were taken completely by surprise. The force, it has been said, lacked only a general.

For the choice of commanders Pitt was not wholly to blame. His selection of Sir Edward Hawke as chief of the naval force can hardly be criticised, for Hawke was a good seaman and a resolute leader, and certain idiosyncrasies which unfitted him for this particular employment could hardly have been known to Pitt. It must be understood, too, that at this time Pitt was not sure of his position, and in making appointments he felt obliged to defer occasionally to the conventions and traditions of the Services, particularly in regard to seniority. For the command of the troops he first chose Lord George Sackville. This was no conventional appointment, and Wolfe, we may be sure, approved of it; but later events were to show that Pitt was mistaken in his man. Sackville refusing the invitation, Pitt turned to Major-General Conway, an officer in whom he had much confidence; but if it is true that this choice was rejected by the king, George II deserves credit, for Conway was an unpopular man of cold, vacillating temper, and it was a pity that he was allowed to go as second in command. Finally the position was offered to Sir John Mordaunt, who accepted it. We have encountered him as a friend of Wolfe's and uncle of Elizabeth Lawson. He was about sixty years old, and so comparatively youthful according

to army standards. In earlier years he had possessed a reputation for daring; but he was now in bad health, nervous, and sluggish. He was not the man to make good use of such gifts as were possessed by Conway and the third in command, Edward Cornwallis, Wolfe's predecessor as lieutenant-colonel of the Twentieth, an officer who, whatever his merits, had a singular knack of favouring the wrong course. Fourth in rank was Wolfe.

By August 10 Wolfe was at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, familiar to him from his melancholy experience there on the eve of the expedition to Cartagena. The military force, consisting of ten regiments of foot, was already assembled. But the transports could not be fitted out before the beginning of September, and in the meantime the officers had "much company, much exercise, a theatre, and all the camp amusements, besides balls and concerts." On September 7, however, the fleet put to sea, less than two months after the enterprise had first been seriously considered. "You are," ran the orders to the commanders, "to attempt, as far as shall be found practicable, a descent with the forces under your command, on the French coast, at or near Rochefort; in order to attack, if practicable, and by a vigorous impression force that place; and to burn and destroy, to the utmost of your power, all Docks, Magazines, Arsenal and Shipping that may be found there; and exert such other efforts as you may judge most proper for annoying the enemy."

The voyage was slow, owing to calms and fog. On September 17 Wolfe wrote home from H. M. S. *Ramillies*: "A man should always have a letter ready writ at sea, because the opportunities of despatching them are seldom and sudden, and a sick, qualmish stomach is to consult the weather. He must write when he can; he may not be able to do it when he would. The progress of our arms has been greatly retarded by calms and fogs; and the formidable Gulf of Biscay, in which we are navigating, is just now as smooth as the river Thames in winter. . . . I have not

myself been one hour well since we embarked, and have the mortification to find that I am the worst mariner in the whole ship." On September 20 the fleet made the Ile de Ré; Vice-Admiral Knowles went to examine the anchorage between it and the Ile d'Oléron; but when the fleet tried next day to enter the channel a change of wind drove the ships back to sea; and it was not till the 22nd that they were able to anchor between the two islands. Meanwhile, of course, the alarm had been given, and the inhabitants of the neighbouring coasts could be seen working at defences. It was known, however, that the French had no more than 10,000 soldiers on the entire west coast of their country; the inhabitants of the region round Rochefort were largely Huguenots, who would be inclined to sympathise with Protestant invaders; and the garrison of the town was panic-stricken and prepared for speedy surrender. Still, the British attempted nothing till the 23rd, when Captain Howe in the *Magnanime* bombarded the fort on the little Ile d'Aix, just outside the estuary of the Charente, and forced it to yield in thirty-five minutes. It was a smart and necessary piece of work, but neither admirals nor generals seemed disposed to turn it to advantage. Wolfe, perhaps foreseeing this, had used his personal friendship with Mordaunt to get leave to land on the island and reconnoitre the adjacent mainland. After spending some time with a telescope on a bastion of the captured fort, he hastened to report his impressions to both Mordaunt and Hawke. Just opposite the Ile d'Aix was the small promontory of Fouras, on which was a fort. This must be captured before anything substantial could be accomplished; but the task presented little difficulty. Three or four miles to the north there was another promontory, less conspicuous, called Châtelailon; this offered a good landing place for a large force, which would be equally well situated for an attack on Rochefort or on La Rochelle. At first both Hawke and Mordaunt approved of Wolfe's suggestions; but, despite his plea

for instant action, both seemed paralysed. A local pilot declared Wolfe's plan practicable. Rear-Admiral Brodrick, sent to inspect the proposed landing-place, reported next day that it was excellent. Thereupon the admirals and the generals conferred, and resolved to hold a council of war next morning. The council sat from morn till night, and decided that they had better not attack Rochefort because they might not be successful. Meanwhile, a naval detachment sent against Fouras had run aground — an event which did not tend to increase the determination of the leaders. On the 26th Hawke, who was exasperated with the generals, told them that unless they did something, he would sail away; but he refused to offer any positive advice, declaring that the movement of troops was a military matter, with which he had nothing to do. The indignation of subordinate officers and men had now reached a high pitch, and so far affected the Higher Command that on the 27th, in Wolfe's words, "the Generals and Admirals view the land with glasses, and agree upon a second council of war." Their deliberations (held on the following day) ended in a resolution to land that night. At midnight the troops entered the boats. They waited in them for two or three hours; then a wind sprang up, and the naval officers declared that it would be dangerous to attempt a landing. Accordingly the soldiers were ordered back to the ships. In the morning Mordaunt was for making a further reconnoissance; but Hawke, who had little right to throw stones, declared himself weary of waiting about, and on his refusal to discuss the matter, the generals decided to go home. Writing next day from the Basque roads off the Ile de Ré, Wolfe told his father that the operations were over. "We lost the lucky moment in war, and are not able to recover it. The whole of this expedition has not cost the nation ten men, nor has any man been able to distinguish himself in the service of his country, except Mr. Howe, who was a great example to us all." The home-

ward voyage was speedy, and by October 17 Wolfe was at Macartney House.

Wolfe's parents were at Bath; but he lived alone at Blackheath, partly for air and exercise, from lack of which his health had suffered, and partly to avoid questions. These, however, he could not escape; and some he was soon forced to answer, for he was required to give evidence before the Commission of Inquiry into the Rochefort fiasco. The commissioners were the Duke of Marlborough, Lord George Sackville, and Major-General Waldegrave; there is no reason to suppose that they would have done better than the officers whose shortcomings they were investigating; but they examined witnesses with great expedition, and their report was ready on November 21, twelve days after their proceedings began. The generals had cut a miserable figure under examination, but Wolfe, who gave evidence on November 14, made a good impression, and the report not only rejected the excuses offered by the Higher Command, but implied that Wolfe's plan, if carried out promptly, would have ensured success. In consequence of the findings of the Commission, Sir John Mordaunt was brought before a court-martial. Wolfe again appeared as a witness, a most unpleasant position for him. Sir John, however, was very ill; it was recognised that he ought never to have been entrusted with so important a task, and that he had not received from the navy all the assistance to which he was entitled. He was accordingly acquitted; but the effect of the inquiry and trial was to weaken established reputations and to leave Pitt with a freer hand when selecting men to execute his schemes. It so happened that, just as the Rochefort expedition sailed, the Duke of Cumberland, outgeneralled and threatened with annihilation, had capitulated at Klosterzeven, thereby surrendering Hanover and all western Germany to the French. With Cumberland discredited, there was scarcely a soldier whom the nation felt it could trust. It

was thus the more disposed to acquiesce in Pitt's experiments, shocking though they were to military prejudice.

Wolfe had returned home boiling with indignation. The letters which he wrote in the following weeks are among his best. While they contain much pungent censure they show too how he had profited by the mistakes that had been made. What impresses one most, however, is the absence of any attempt by Wolfe to exculpate himself. "As to the expedition," he wrote immediately on his return, "it has been conducted so ill that I am ashamed to have been of the party. The public couldn't do better than dismiss six or eight of us from their service." Again he says, "The true state of the case is, that our sea-officers do not care to be engaged in any business of this sort, where little is to be had but blows and reputation; and the officers of the infantry are so profoundly ignorant, that an enterprise of any vigour astonishes them to that degree that they have not strength of mind nor confidence to carry it through. . . . If they would even blunder on and fight a little, making some amends to the public by their courage for their want of skill; but this excessive degree of caution, or whatever name it deserves, leaves exceeding bad impressions among the troops, who, to do them justice, upon this occasion showed all the signs of spirit and goodwill." This praise of the rank and file, which Wolfe extended equally to the sailors, he repeats elsewhere, and it is strange that after this experience he should still have spoken of them in the scathing language which will be quoted later. His most illuminating letter about the expedition was one to Rickson, and it throws such valuable light on Wolfe's military capacity that most of it must be given word for word.

I am not sorry that I went, notwithstanding what has happened; one may always pick up something useful from amongst the most fatal errors. I have found out that an Admiral should endeavour to run into an enemy's port immediately after he appears before it; that

he should anchor the transport ships and frigates as close as can be to the land; that he should reconnoitre and observe it as quick as possible, and lose no time in getting the troops on shore; that previous directions should be given in respect to landing the troops and a proper disposition made for the boats of all sorts, appointing leaders and fit persons for conducting the different divisions. On the other hand, experience shows me that, in an affair depending upon vigour and dispatch, the Generals should settle their plan of operations, so that no time may be lost in idle debate and consultations when the sword should be drawn; that pushing on smartly is the road to success, and more particularly so in an affair of this nature; . . . that nothing is to be reckoned an obstacle to your undertaking which is not found really so upon trial; that in war something must be allowed to chance and fortune, seeing it is in its nature hazardous, and an option of difficulties; that the greatness of an object should come under consideration, opposed to the impediments that lie in the way; that the honour of one's country is to have some weight; and that, in particular circumstances and times, the loss of a thousand men is rather an advantage to a nation than otherwise, seeing that gallant attempts raise its reputation and make it respectable; whereas the contrary appearances sink the credit of a country, ruin the troops, and create infinite uneasiness and discontent at home. I know not what to say, my dear R——, or how to account for our proceedings, unless I own to you that there never was people collected together so unfit for the business they were sent upon — dilatory, ignorant, irresolute and some grains of a very unmanly quality, and very unsoldier-like or unsailory-like. I have already been too imprudent; I have said too much, and people make me say ten times more than I ever uttered; therefore, repeat nothing out of my letter nor my name as author of any one thing. . . .

Little practice in war, ease and convenience at home, great incomes, and no wants, with no ambition to stir to action, are not the instruments to work a successful war withal; I see no prospect of better deeds. . . . Many handsome things would have been done by the troops had they been permitted to act; as it is, Captain Howe carried off all the honour of this enterprise.

If the lessons which Wolfe drew from the Rochefort expedition had been laid to heart by naval and military officers, how many

subsequent failures, from his time to our own, would have been avoided. Those who have called Wolfe a braggart should ponder the fact that in the whole of this long letter there is not a word of the plan of attack which he himself had suggested: indeed, in all his correspondence I have found only one vague allusion to it, and that was made after it had been publicly commended by the Commission of Inquiry.

Wolfe was mistaken when he declared that Captain Howe was the only man who had gained any credit in the Rochefort affair. Probably he meant it, for he evidently reached home in a state of despondency about his future. He learned that, though the King had refused to make him a colonel, a younger man than himself had just been promoted to that rank. He at once wrote to Lord Barrington, the Secretary at War, resigning the office of Quartermaster-General in Ireland, about which, as we have seen, he had for some months been wavering. He apparently expected to go back to his duties as lieutenant-colonel of the Twentieth.

Barrington, however, asked Wolfe to suspend his resignation for a few days, and in less than a week he heard that he was to be raised to the coveted rank, "which at this time," he justly said, "is more to be prized than at any other, because it carries with it a favourable appearance as to my conduct upon this late expedition, and an acceptance of my good intentions." He withdrew his resignation of his Irish post, and spoke of setting out for Ireland as soon as he was released by the conclusion of the inquiries and judicial proceedings arising out of the failure near Rochefort.

But Wolfe was now a famous man. His promotion had been mainly due to Admiral Hawke, whose praises of Wolfe had been repeated by Anson to the King. The evidence which he gave before the Commission of Inquiry increased his reputation. People of all sorts were eager to hear his version of what

had happened. The Prince of Wales, afterwards George III, sent for him, questioned him about the expedition, and listened to Wolfe's explanation of his method of training the Twentieth. The Spirit of Irony must have grinned to hear the conversation between the young general whose skill was to save the American colonies for his country and the young prince whose stupidity was to lose them.

Pitt was naturally much pleased with Wolfe. He could at least claim that the man who came out of the Rochefort affair with most credit was one whom he himself had raised to prominence from obscurity. It was natural that he should wish to make fuller use of his services. Thus it came about that Wolfe's Christmas holiday, spent partly at Bath and partly at Exeter, was curtailed by the news that he had been appointed Brigadier in the force which was to attempt the reduction of Louisbourg, the French stronghold on the island of Cape Breton.

CHAPTER VIII
THE CANADIAN EXPEDITION, 1758:
THE VOYAGE TO LOUISBOURG

AFTER the return of the Rochefort expedition, the war news for a while became better. Frederick the Great inflicted on the French a humiliating defeat at Rossbach, and, turning on the Austrians, bundled them out of his Silesian territories. The tidings of Clive's great triumph at Plassey arrived in the winter, and gave more satisfaction than anything that had been reported since the war began. In America, on the other hand, the situation looked blacker than ever. The reinforcements sent out by Pitt had achieved nothing. Montcalm had struck southward from Quebec, and in August had captured Fort William Henry, on Lake George, after a siege of five days. Lord Loudoun, who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief in America after the death of Braddock, was instructed to capture Louisbourg. He assembled an adequate force at Halifax; but Admiral Holburne, an elderly Scotsman, failed to arrive punctually with the fleet that was to carry out the necessary naval operations; and this was used by both commanders as a pretext for abandoning the plan. Holburne did indeed attempt a blockade of Louisbourg in the early autumn, but his fleet was scattered and damaged by a great equinoctial gale, and he thought himself lucky to get back to Halifax, whence with most of his force he sailed to England before the winter.

Pitt, who had spoken of conquering America on the plains of Germany, now told Newcastle that England and Europe were to be fought for in America. Influenced, it seems, by the advice of De Lancey, the lieutenant-governor of New York, he adopted,

in an enlarged form, the plan for a converging naval and military attack on Canada which, under the name of the Glorious Enterprise, had been familiar to the British colonists for two generations. Loudoun was recalled. General Abercromby was put in his place, and instructed to invade Canada by way of Lake George and Lake Champlain. Brigadier Forbes was to renew Braddock's attempt to reduce Fort Duquesne. And a fresh expedition was to be despatched for the purpose of taking first Louisbourg and then Quebec. To direct the naval side of this enterprise Pitt chose Admiral Edward Boscawen, a very capable seaman, who was familiar with the waters off Cape Breton and Newfoundland. To command the troops he selected Colonel Jeffrey Amherst, who had lately done good service in Germany. This was one of his unconventional appointments, for Amherst was only forty, and Pitt was judging by promise rather than achievement. He was given the rank of Major-General, and the three brigadiers under him were Edward Whitmore, the elderly colonel of the 22nd Foot, Charles Lawrence, Governor of Nova Scotia, and Wolfe, who, it is clear, was intended to act as second-in-command in active military operations.

It is improbable that many officers envied Wolfe his appointment. It is easy for us to see that the Louisbourg enterprise was the most important operation which the British undertook in the ensuing year; but in those days little was known of the colonies, British or French, the fighting there was on a small scale, regular troops had seldom distinguished themselves in it and according to many were in their nature unfitted for it. A transatlantic expedition seemed to most Englishmen a "side-show," in which nothing decisive could be achieved and little glory gained. They had a superstitious faith in the supreme importance of the European front. In Wolfe's case, American service meant, as he well knew, several months of unrelieved sea-sickness. Yet

he had let it be known that he would like to go with the Louisbourg force, though it is not certain whether Pitt had been influenced by his wishes. Wolfe himself attributed his eagerness to a professional zeal for active service, no matter where; but there is reason to believe that he understood the vital importance of the operations in America. We may suspect, too, that he held it better to rule in hell than serve in heaven, and considered that the opportunities for leadership which would probably offer themselves in America might open the way to an independent command in that country.

Pitt's energy was now working at full power, and Wolfe had little time for preparations or farewells. He finally resigned his Irish appointment, after holding it for ten months without performing any of the duties attached to it. Just before leaving he offended his mother by refusing to use his influence to secure a commission for a cousin whom he described to her as a "low dog" and an "idle vagabond." The old General was in very poor health, and his son thought it not unlikely that he would die before the expedition ended; but Wolfe's letters on the eve of departure are cool, and it is plain that he and his parents were not on cordial terms. He paid all his debts, and entrusted his private affairs to George Warde and Guy Carleton. He was still a poor man, and he estimated that he would be £500 or £600 out of pocket on the expedition. Should it fail and he be thereby discredited, his prospects would indeed be dismal. He was, however, fully awake to the possibility that he might never return, as, apart from the risks of battle, he had misgivings lest he might succumb on the voyage.

Still, Wolfe was on the whole in good spirits when on February 2 he arrived in Portsmouth. A week later everything was ready, but owing to unfavourable winds he was not required to go aboard until the 12th. In the interval he wrote several letters. He was naturally impatient to be off; but it was perhaps

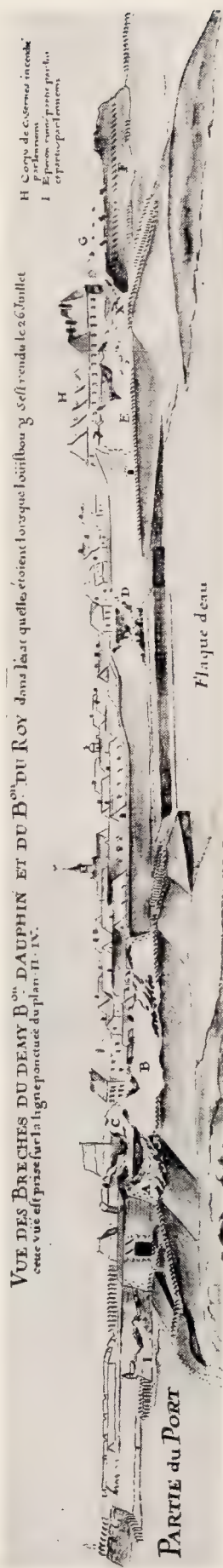
a little extravagant to say that "the necessity of living in the midst of the diabolical citizens of Portsmouth is a real and unavoidable calamity," or to doubt "if there is such another collection of demons upon the whole earth." That Wolfe was in a self-confident and explosive mood appears in two letters to Lord George Sackville, with whom his earlier friendship had evidently been renewed. Sackville was no less than Master-General of the Ordnance, commander-in-chief, that is, of the artillery of the British Army, yet Wolfe writes facetiously about his own prospects, lays down the law (very sensibly, it must be admitted) about the best way to take Louisbourg, comments with an air of authority on the news from India, and criticises new drill-regulations just introduced by the authorities. The soldiers of the Portsmouth garrison he describes as "vagabonds that stroll about in dirty red clothes from one gin-shop to another," while the other troops in the town (most of whom were going overseas with him) were "dirty, drunken, insolent rascals, improved by the hellish nature of the place, where every kind of corruption, immorality, and looseness is carried to excess." The British private of those days was no saint and Portsmouth was no Utopia; but, while one may admire Wolfe's powers of vituperation, it is well to treat these outbursts as of psychological rather than historical value.

Very soon, however, Wolfe was in no state to find fault with anybody. Boscawen, eager to get to sea, left Spithead on February 15, but was obliged to lie off St. Helen's in the Isle of Wight for some days. A week later he was at anchor in Plymouth Sound, whither he had been driven by stress of weather, having lost one of his best ships, the *Invincible*, which had been wrecked on a sand-bank. "You may believe," wrote Wolfe, "that I have passed my time disagreeably enough in this rough weather; at best, the life, you know, is not pleasant." Then his letters ceased for more than three months.



vii.

View of Louisbourg in 1745, from the original in the collection of the Service Hydrographique de la Marine, Paris. Reproduced by permission of Senator J. S. McLennan.



VIII.

View of Louisbourg from the north-west, showing the state of the fortifications on July 26, 1758. From the original in the collection of the Service Hydrographique de la Marine, Paris. Reproduced by permission of Senator J. S. McLennan.

Of all the soldiers on board the fleet, Wolfe probably understood best the significance of what they were attempting. Seven or eight years before, when his friend Rickson was serving in Nova Scotia, he had begged for full information about the country and its inhabitants, concerning which he had hitherto been as ignorant as most other Englishmen. Rickson gave him "a very satisfactory account of the settlement," which brought home to Wolfe that "Acadia is near an island," and encouraged him to pass some characteristic criticism on the doings of the British authorities in the colony. He urged that the British should strengthen their defences on the isthmus of Chignecto, predicting that, on the renewal of war, the French would invade Nova Scotia from that side. In reality there was much greater danger to the British from other quarters; but in times when a British prime minister could be ignorant of the whereabouts of Annapolis, it was astonishing that a lieutenant-colonel should ever have heard of Chignecto, still more so that he should have given thought to its strategic importance.

As for Louisbourg, Wolfe had been studying its situation and brooding over plans of attack. It is probable, however, that he exaggerated its military strength. Louisbourg was quite a young town, even for America. Until the treaty of Utrecht had allotted the mainland of Acadie to the British, the island of Cape Breton, or Ile Royale as the French commonly called it, had been neglected. The treaty, however, allowed France to retain islands in the gulf of St. Lawrence and its approaches, with the exception of Newfoundland, and she now became alive to the necessity of maintaining some control over the approach to Canada. Cape Breton was therefore to be settled, and a strong fortress to be erected on its shores. After several years of hesitation the small settlement called Louisbourg was selected as the seat of government and the military centre of the colony. A few miles to the south-west of the most easterly point of the

island, there was a break about a mile wide in the coast. Almost in the middle of the gap there was a small island, to the south-west of which a string of sand-banks and islets stretched to the land. To the north-east, however, there was a deep channel, through which the largest ships of that time might pass. Within they might sail ahead for nearly a mile, and about the same distance laterally towards the south-west and a mile-and-a-half in the opposite direction. For some way along the harbour's south-west shore there was a depth of at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms close to the beach, fronting which the town was built. In shape it was an irregular triangle. Its harbour front was some 600 yards long. Its eastern side, a little greater in length, ran across the neck of the promontory at the south-west of the harbour mouth and then for a short distance followed the coast. As this side was difficult of approach, its fortifications were not elaborate. From its southern extremity to the western end of the harbour-front, a distance of more than 1000 yards, were the defences which entitled the town to rank as a fortress. The most notable of them was the Bastion du Roy, placed about the middle of the line, which included the Château Saint-Louis, a four-storey building, surmounted by a lofty steeple and containing the Governor's residence, the Royal Chapel, and the barracks of the garrison. There were also the Bastion du Dauphin, at the harbour end of the wall, the Bastion de la Reine, half-way between the Château Saint-Louis and the sea, and the Demi-bastion de la Princesse, at the seaward extremity. These works were linked by a wall of masonry faced with a ditch excavated according to the accepted principles of fortification. There was a strong battery on the island at the harbour mouth and another on the mainland facing it. In a plan the works look very formidable, and they were perhaps as good as any in North America. But the French government never furnished them with enough guns, enough ammunition, or enough men. The place was in continual danger

of famine. An attacker who had command of the sea and an adequate force of artillery might at any time during its existence have reduced it in a few weeks, given a reasonable amount of zeal among officers and men of both the naval and the military contingents.

It must not be supposed, however, that Louisbourg was negligible. Its situation was of great strategic importance; for it was nearer than any other port to the Cabot Straits, through which passed most of the maritime traffic to and from Canada. It also provided an admirable base for the raids of privateers on the shipping of New England, though its advantages for this purpose were never properly utilised. What concerned the British most, however, was its commercial success. Lying nearer than any of its competitors to the richest fishing "banks" off North America, it soon acquired a trade in fish which aroused the angry envy of New England. Besides the fishermen of the island, fifteen or sixteen thousand came from France every year for cod, using Louisbourg as their base. About the middle of the century the Louisbourg catch of cod averaged 150,000 quintals a year, and its value was estimated at a million sterling. It was not only in relation to the fisheries, however, that Louisbourg frightened English merchants; it was becoming an entrepôt for goods of many kinds. The products of Canada, the West Indies, and Europe were brought here and exchanged against one another; and what was particularly galling to the British authorities, there was a brisk commerce between the town and New England, though this was forbidden by both the governments concerned. In 1743, out of 175 vessels entering the port no fewer than 78 came from British colonies. And in the years immediately preceding the Seven Years' War, the town probably reached the height of its prosperity. While not imposing, it was fairly presentable in appearance; the streets, if narrow, were straight, intersecting one another at right angles; and

many of the houses, which were usually of wood with one floor, had stone foundations. Next to the Château, the most impressive building was the Hospital, which had a lofty spire, rather out of proportion to the height of the house itself. The Recollet friars had a house in the town; so had the Sisters of the Congregation, who conducted a school. Yet in 1752 the civilian population of the town and its environs was only 2674. It was, after all, a little place, and life there was neither luxurious nor lively. One visitor described the diet of the inhabitants as consisting in winter of cod and hog's lard, and in summer of fresh fish, bad salt rancid butter, and bad oil, and there is no doubt that fish was the staple food. The principal amusement of the town appears to have been gambling, and its chief vice drunkenness. One is struck by the fact that the Church played a much smaller part in the affairs of Ile Royale than in those of Canada. The settlement had grown up in a sceptical and tolerant age, and while none but Catholics were permitted to become citizens of Louisbourg, there were for many years a number of Protestants in the Swiss companies which formed part of the garrison. Ile Royale, however, resembled Canada in that there was generally a good deal of petty corruption among the officials, and that the relations between the Governor, who was in control of military affairs, and the Commissaire-Ordonnateur (corresponding to the Intendant of Canada), who was at the head of the civil administration, were commonly unfriendly, to the great detriment of the colony. The main drawback to life on Ile Royale was the climate, which a modern resident has called "as dreary and disappointing as well can be conceived." It was, however, healthy enough, like the adjacent parts of the continent, where the weather perplexed the British officers of those days, one of whom, after rejecting the view that the prevailing fogs were caused by the breath of the innumerable fish and other denizens of the sea in those regions, ascribed them to the numerous

swamps, bogs, lakes, and rivers, the exhalations of which, while impairing visibility, were purged of noxious vapour "by the myriads of venomous reptiles and insects." Wolfe's view of the climate of Cape Breton was less charitable. "The early season in this country — I mean the months of April and May, — are intolerably cold and disagreeable; June and July are foggy; August rainy; September has always a tempest; October is generally a dry, fair month; and the winter sets in early in November." The weather in fact was the chief safeguard of Louisbourg.

That the defences of Louisbourg were not very formidable was strikingly proved in 1745, when, after a six weeks' siege, it surrendered to a naval squadron under Commodore Warren and a force of 4200 New Englanders under Lieutenant-General Pepperrell. Pepperrell, though a colonel of militia, was by calling a merchant; and save for 300 Marines, there were no regular troops among the besiegers. The capture of an important stronghold by such an expedition has often been spoken of as a wonderful feat of arms. Astonishing it certainly was; for while Warren was a very able man and Pepperrell an officer of good judgment and great energy, the land-forces were ill-trained, insubordinate, and of doubtful courage: the Commodore, usually a man of moderate and tactful speech, is reported to have said afterwards that "they were the greatest set of cowards and poltroons he ever knew; they were all bluster, noise, and were good for nothing." But there were in the town only 1500 men fit to bear arms, and of these but 600 were soldiers, not enough, that is, to man the batteries properly. The supply of powder was so short that after a fortnight it had to be used sparingly, and at the end there were no more than 42 barrels in the stores. In these circumstances the besiegers could not be prevented from approaching so near to the town that their not very efficient artillery did much damage to the fortifications. When they planted

a battery on the point to the north-east of the harbour entrance and so rendered untenable the island half-way across, the defenders utterly lost heart. If, however, their numbers had been double, and if the French government had provided them with enough food and munitions, they would have repelled Pepperrell with little difficulty. On the other hand, if Warren could have maintained his station off the town, he would eventually have reduced it by hunger without any assistance from forces on land.

At the peace of 1748, Louisbourg had been returned to France. The garrison was increased. A skilled engineer was sent out to repair and improve the fortifications. In 1751 a colonel of the French army arrived to command the troops; he found them inefficient and ill-disciplined, but soon remedied many of their defects. Yet the position of the place was always insecure. For a state of peace in Europe did not preclude strife in the colonies. The governors of Cape Breton were instructed to give secret encouragement to Indian attacks on the British in Nova Scotia; the British colonists further south were encroaching on territory claimed by the French beyond the Alleghanies; and on the frontiers of Canada each side was ever on the alert to take advantage of the other. It soon became clear again that it was in peace rather than in war that Louisbourg was dangerous to Britain. And in 1755 all pretence of peace in America was cast aside. Great Britain sent out Braddock with two regiments of regular troops; France despatched Dieskau with six battalions, two of which were destined for Louisbourg. The British Admiralty ordered Boscawen, with fifteen ships, to cruise off Newfoundland and stop them. Amid the fogs and ice of early summer in those waters, Boscawen had a desperate task, and no one will be severe on him for failing to intercept the soldiers. The two battalions for Louisbourg, one of the regiment of Artois, the other of the regiment of Bourgogne, reached their destination safely on June 14. Meanwhile Boscawen had

taken two French men-of-war, the *Alcide* and the *Lys*, and was making for Louisbourg, whence he could be seen a day or two after the arrival of the troops. One of his ships ran in near the harbour mouth, and a gun on the island battery fired at her. "On its discharge," according to a diarist who was in the town at the time, "the carriage and the platform flew into a thousand pieces, and if the English had known our position their fleet might have come into the Harbour without any risk from our batteries not having a single cannon fit to be fired." But the English did not know the state of the defences; they contented themselves with trying to maintain a blockade, in which they were on the whole successful. The town soon began to feel the shortage of provisions.

Next year Commodore Holmes attempted to resume the blockade of Louisbourg with two ships of the line and their tenders. In June he was disturbed by the appearance of a French squadron under Admiral Beaussier de l'Isle, who was on his way home from Quebec, whither he had escorted the Marquis de Montcalm and two regiments of French regulars. Beaussier and Holmes fought a spirited action, ending, though the French were in superior force, in their withdrawal into Louisbourg harbour. Holmes sailed to Halifax, and returned in a few days with strong reinforcements; but Beaussier managed to elude him and get back to France. The British nevertheless gave great trouble to Louisbourg during the year. They took a powerful French frigate, which was bringing money and men to the town, and their captures of trading vessels added greatly to the difficulties of the inhabitants, who in August were "greatly distress'd . . . for meat, drink and shoes," according to the report of an English envoy.

In 1757 Louisbourg enjoyed better fortune. Mention has already been made of the abortive project for the capture of the place by Loudoun and Holburne. It would, however, be unjust

to infer that the French had trusted entirely to the incapacity of their enemies. Their navy seldom appeared to such advantage as in its attempts to succour Louisbourg in this year. First, Commodore de Bauffremont sailed from Brest with four ships, and after spending some weeks in the West Indies, reached Louisbourg on May 31. Then Commodore du Revest, also with four ships, got out of the Mediterranean, notwithstanding Admiral Saunders, and arrived at Louisbourg on June 19. Next day there appeared Lieutenant-General du Bois de la Motte, who had eluded the British off Brest, with nine ships of the line and two frigates. There were now eighteen ships of the line and six smaller vessels in Louisbourg harbour. But, though Holburne's squadron was weaker, La Motte would not engage him when in August he appeared off the coast, and the British actually resumed the blockade until their ships were scattered by tempest towards the end of September. La Motte, who seems to have thought that it was enough for him to protect Louisbourg, took his fleet home soon afterwards. He could fairly claim that he had contributed to the frustration of the English plans. Had he been in the British service, he would very likely have been shot for shirking action with a weaker enemy.

It was impossible to keep secret the destination of the expedition under Boscawen and Amherst. The French hoped to frustrate it by manœuvres like those of the previous year. But this time the squadron which essayed to leave the Mediterranean was unable to force a passage through the Straits of Gibraltar. One ship from Brest, which got very near Louisbourg, was caught in the ice, lost many of her men by cold and disease, and had to return to Europe; another was captured by the British as soon as she left port. But towards the end of March, six ships of the line, under Beaussier de l'Isle, arrived safely, bringing food, munitions, and a battalion of *Volontaires Etrangers* numbering 680 men. On May 30, the Chevalier Marchaut de la Houlière,

an officer of much experience, arrived to take command of the troops. About the same time, a squadron of six vessels arrived at Port Dauphin with a battalion of soldiers, who managed to reach Louisbourg just in time to assist in its defence. The garrison now amounted to 3500 trained men, only 200 of whom were militia, and the defence could call upon a large number of able-bodied civilians and a few Indians. It was a much stronger force than the town had possessed in 1745, but it was still far too small. The fortifications, furthermore, though they had been strengthened in the past three years and were more powerful than at the time of the earlier siege, were neither well placed nor well constructed. But, however large the garrison and however strong the defences, Louisbourg was the destined prey to any well-organised attack unless the French could secure command of the adjacent waters. And if they could not do that when confronted by Holburne with a weaker force, they were not likely to succeed against Boscawen with a stronger.

Early in April Sir Charles Hardy, with a formidable squadron, had appeared off Louisbourg, and his blockade, though not complete, had greatly embarrassed the port. As for Boscawen, it was as if the elements were in league against him. What with contrary winds, adverse currents, and unwonted calms, it took him eleven weeks to sail from Plymouth to Halifax, by way of Madeira, the Canaries, and the Bermudas. When on May 9 he entered Halifax harbour with nine ships of the line, he found a considerable force already assembled, under the command of Brigadier Lawrence. Several ships with stores and artillery were also in port. Within the next ten days there arrived Brigadier Whitmore, five battalions from the American colonies, one more from England, and much of the artillery and stores that had been collected for an attack on Louisbourg in the previous year. Boscawen had at once begun to make ready for an early start for Cape Breton, since he and Whitmore had instructions

to land the army on the island without waiting for Amherst. He had found many things prepared for him by the soldiers who had been in Halifax during the winter, such as wooden block-houses for protecting a camp and a very wide cart, with wheels eight feet in diameter, for transporting cannon over marshy ground. While waiting in Halifax the troops were practised in the operations they would be called upon to perform, especially landing from boats and forest fighting. "In all these operations," writes an officer who was present, "you may imagine that Gen. Wolfe was remarkably active. The Scene afforded Scope for his Military Genius." A measure destined to have important consequences was the formation of a corps of Light Infantry, which was made up of detachments from the line regiments, numbering in all 1100 men; they wore lighter clothing and carried lighter muskets than the rest of the infantry, and were expected to be particularly useful against the Indians.

Wolfe's letters are reticent about his experiences on the voyage, but he apparently stood it well, for he says nothing about his health after arriving in Halifax. As might have been expected, the delay there made him very impatient. He was in a critical, not to say, irritable temper. Boscawen he trusted and admired; but, though he was eager for action, he was by no means confident of success. He had his doubts about Abercromby, who had withheld some of the howitzers that had been intended for Louisbourg the year before. He complained of the lack of spare muskets and of rifles. The provisions supplied to the troops did not please him. Far too much salt meat was eaten. "Some of the regiments of this army," he told Lord George Sackville, "have 3 or 400 men eat up with the scurvy. All of them that are wounded or hurt by accident run great risk of their lives from the corrupted state of the blood, so your lordship may rest assured that the enterprise of Louisbourg will cost a multitude of men. . . . There is not an ounce of fresh

beef or mutton contracted for even for the sick and wounded, which besides the inhumanity, is both impolitic and absurd. Mr. Boscawen, indeed, has taken the best precautions in his power by ordering 600 head of live cattle for the fleet and army the moment he arrived. The curious part of this barbarity is that the scoundrels of contractors can afford the fresh meat in many places and circumstances as cheap as the salt. I think our stock for the siege full little and none of the medicines for the hospitals are arriv'd. No horses or oxen for the artillery, &c.

“Too much money and too much rum necessarily affect the discipline of an army. We have glaring evidence of their ill consequences every moment. Sergeants drunk upon duty, 2 sentries upon their posts and the rest wallowing in the dirt. I believe no nation ever paid so many bad soldiers at so high a rate. . . .

“Our clothes, our arms, our accoutrements, nay even our shoes and stockings are all improper for this country.”

Some of Wolfe's strictures were due to the fact that in Nova Scotia it had become the practice to give the soldiers an extra shilling a day when they were constructing fortifications, making siege equipment, or doing other work that lay outside their ordinary duties. But though much of the letter was probably sensible, its general tone was unwarrantably pessimistic. To do Wolfe justice, he seems to have concealed his misgivings from those about him; indeed, his letters to his relatives show quite a different spirit. It is interesting to note that he was enthusiastic over the Highlanders, whom he describes as “very useful serviceable soldiers, and commanded by the most manly corps of officers I ever saw.” That Wolfe was on good terms with the other leaders of the expedition there can be no question; and his popularity in a wider circle was doubtless assured after a dinner which he gave at the Great Pontac hotel to forty-six guests, whose food cost him a pound a head and who consumed

seventy bottles of Madeira, fifty of claret, and twenty-five of brandy, the bill amounting in all to £98-12s.-6d. Writing to Sackville from Halifax, an aide-de-camp of Abercromby declared that it was impossible for him to express "the harmony, Spirit, and confidence, that reigns universally thro' the Army and Navy." "We have all," he adds, "the utmost confidence in Admiral Boscawen's zeal and activity in the service and when we heard that he was to command the Fleet we assured ourselves that the Campaign would be vigorous and active. The unanimity that presides at Home seems to diffuse itself abroad." The writer's spirit was truer to facts than Wolfe's. It was a very formidable armament that put to sea on May 28. There were eleven ships of the line and ten frigates; with store ships and lesser craft the fleet numbered 180 sail; while Hardy was already off Louisbourg with ten ships of the line and four frigates. The crews of the fighting ships totalled some 13,000 men. The number of soldiers on board was about the same. Despite Wolfe's laments at the fewness of the howitzers, the siege artillery was very formidable, and, while ammunition for the muskets was scarcely adequate, it was plentiful for the big guns. The fleet was barely clear of the harbour when it met the *Dublin* with Amherst on board. He had not left England till March 16. Whether he was to blame for the delay is not clear; but he was one of those men who habitually need a long time to do anything. On this occasion, however, he was prompt, for without going ashore he had himself put on board the *Namur*, Boscawen's flagship, and went on towards Louisbourg.

The voyage was uneventful. The weather was exceptionally clear for the time of year, and the *Namur* was seldom out of sight of land. For two days her log records fresh gales, but the weather had moderated when at a quarter-past-ten on the morning of Friday, June 2, she sighted the towers of Louisbourg and the masts of the ships in the harbor. That day and the next the

fleet anchored in Gabarus Bay, some six miles to the south-west of Louisbourg. The frigates were nearest to the shore; then came the big ships of war; and outside them were the transports and store ships. For a day or two the winds were from some easterly quarter, and Boscawen's dispositions have been criticised on the ground that the French ships at Louisbourg had an excellent chance of taking him at a disadvantage. But Boscawen knew well that a daring stroke against odds was not to be expected from the naval officers in Louisbourg; besides, Hardy's squadron was all the time off the harbour, and it alone was far more powerful than the whole force of the French.

During the wait at Halifax, Boscawen and the three Brigadiers had discussed plans for effecting a landing. This, it was recognised, would be the most critical part of the operations. "When the army is landed," wrote Wolfe, "the business is half done," and, he added, "we must get on shore or perish altogether in the attempt." A rather elaborate plan was approved, which involved simultaneous landings at several points both north and south of the town. Wolfe was to land with 3000 men at the bay of Miré, some ten miles to the north, and march on Louisbourg by road; he saw the dangers of the operation and had been considering means for repelling the attacks of Indians and Acadians to which he expected to be exposed. After Amherst joined the expedition, this plan seems to have been dropped; at least, an inspection of the coast of Gabarus Bay, made by Amherst, Wolfe, and Lawrence at the first possible moment, was immediately followed by the issue of instructions for the execution of an altogether different scheme.

The plan now adopted had the merit of keeping the whole army under the eye of the commander-in-chief, whereas the earlier one would have scattered it and demanded the most accurate synchronisation of a number of attacks and advances. On the other hand, the new plan selected as the landing-place the

very part of the coast where the French were best prepared. Both sides were much influenced by what had happened in 1745. The Americans had landed along the coast of Gabarus Bay from Flat Point to Cormorandière Cove. Amherst was disposed to imitate them, and as regards depth of water and the nature of the shore, the place was most suitable. But in the previous year the French had dug trenches at every point near Louisbourg where a landing seemed feasible; these defences had lately been improved, and guns had been mounted at the most vulnerable points. Thus, at the Cormorandière were eleven guns, supported by 1000 men, at Flat Point a like number of guns, with 930 men entrenched close by, while White Point, which offered smaller facilities for landing, had seven guns and 350 men. The trenches ran along the crest of the low cliffs which here bound the coast, but wherever the beach was smooth and level the French had tried to render it impassable by an abattis of trees, placed with their branches towards the sea. This abattis was particularly formidable at Cormorandière Cove; so dense was it, indeed, that the British took it for a natural thicket of scrubby bush.

Inspired, we may suspect, by Wolfe, Amherst was unwontedly enterprising. An attack was planned for June 4. But that day, and for several days following, the weather was unfavorable: either the surf was too high or visibility was bad. On the 6th the men were actually sent in the boats towards the shore; but it was foggy, the surf still ran dangerously high, and the troops had to be recalled, Amherst being careful to explain why. Meanwhile, information about the coast and the defences was constantly being gathered, and Amherst's plans underwent repeated modification. At last, on Wednesday, June 7, the conditions seemed promising, though the *Namur's* log records little improvement. It was resolved, unless the weather became worse, to attempt a landing at dawn next day. The prophets

were right; the wind fell in the evening; at midnight all lights on the transports, save one or two signals, were extinguished; and while it was yet dark the troops, preserving all possible silence, were placed in the boats. They had in their pockets bread and cheese for two days, but nothing else with them except their clothes, weapons, and ammunition.

The flotilla was in three divisions. On the right Whitmore was to threaten White Point with six battalions, but this movement was no more than a feint. So too was the attack of Lawrence's detachment, consisting likewise of six battalions, which was to make for the cove at Flat Point. The real landing party was under Wolfe; it consisted of the grenadier companies of eleven battalions, all picked men, Fraser's Highlanders, the Light Infantry, and the American Rangers; in numbers, it was inferior to the force under each of the other brigadiers, but for the work in hand it was of admirable quality. As soon as it became light, there was a lively interchange of fire between the French batteries and the English frigates near the shore, but after a quarter of an hour hundreds of boats rowed rapidly from behind the men-of-war. For some way Wolfe's division kept in touch with Lawrence's, but suddenly it swerved to the left and made for Cormorandière Cove.

The British Higher Command had grossly miscalculated the strength of the French defences. But Wolfe's men, knowing nothing of this, were full of confidence and in high spirits. "Who would not go to Hell, to hear such music for half an hour?" shouted a sergeant as they came under fire, to fall dead a moment later. The leading boats neared the land with small loss, and Amherst afterwards commended the wisdom of the French in reserving their fire. Had they withheld it until at least some of the attackers were on shore, they would have done still better; but it is hardly just to blame them, for the tremendous storm of grape-shot and musket-balls which broke from the

trenches just before the first boats were beached soon convinced Wolfe that a landing at that place was impossible. He signalled a retreat and the boats pulled round. It was the first operation of war that Wolfe had really directed, and we can faintly imagine his mortification at this moment.

The cove, which has an arc of 660 yards, is bounded towards the east by a promontory just high enough to conceal the shore beyond. Amherst had ordered the officers to avoid crowding together, and it was perhaps because of this that three boats found themselves a few yards on the far side of the little cape. They contained Light Infantry, and were under the command of Lieutenants Hopkins and Brown and Ensign Grant. In the previous year the French had erected a little watch tower on the headland and manned it with a small body of troops; but now it was unoccupied, and the men in the three boats found themselves entirely sheltered from the enemy's fire. The shore hereabouts was very rocky, but there was a tiny space of sand which could be approached without risk, and on this they landed. Meanwhile, Wolfe, who had kept his head, was eagerly looking for some means of retrieving his fortunes. As his boat moved out, he was able to see what was happening beyond the promontory, and he immediately ordered a dash for the landing-place. The boats pulled anyhow towards the point; many crashed against rocks and were stove in, and not a few men were drowned; but the rest, Wolfe among the foremost, leapt ashore, or plunged through the surf, and as soon as they could cross the beach formed up on the higher ground behind. Wolfe, carrying a light cane, made his dispositions with the greatest coolness, and, it is said, found time to give a guinea apiece to two Highlanders who had been pointed out to him as the first men to get ashore.

It was some time before the French commander at the Cove realised what was happening, his view being obscured by the smoke of his own guns as well as those of the British ships which



IX. JAMES WOLFE

Painted after his return from Louisbourg in 1758, perhaps at Bath. In Wolfe's left hand is a plan of Louisbourg. This is undoubtedly the last important portrait of Wolfe painted from life. Artist unknown. The original is owned by Dr. J. Clarence Webster.

were trying to cover their troops. For a few minutes after the boats had turned to the promontory he continued to shoot straight in front of his position. Some of the rear boats, it is true, attracted a heavy fire; but by that time many men were safely ashore. A vigorous counter-attack might have dislodged them, for they were naturally in some disorder and their muskets were wet. But while his opponent was wondering what to do, Wolfe seized the initiative; the French found their trenches enfiladed by a body of American Rangers, while hundreds of Light Infantry and Highlanders came hard at their heels along the promontory. The nerve of the French failed them; they left their defences, abandoned their artillery and stores, and fled precipitately towards the town, pursued across wooded and marshy ground by Wolfe and the Light Infantry. The French at Flat Point were now in danger of being cut off, and they too hastily retired. Those at White Point stood firm until ordered to withdraw to the town, when they retreated in good order, though they forgot to spike their guns. Meanwhile, Lawrence's troops were landing between Flat Point and the Cormorandière Cove, but they seem to have taken little part in the pursuit, which was nevertheless pressed by Wolfe's men until the British came under the fire of the guns of the town. They then fell back, having discovered how near the walls it was possible to camp in safety. From the beginning of the attack to the end of the pursuit, no more than four hours had elapsed.

The British loss was 46 killed, 38 of whom were drowned, and 59 wounded. The casualties of the French amounted altogether to 114. Nearly all their wounded of course fell into the hands of the victors, who also captured seventeen guns, two mortars, and fourteen of the small cannon called swivels, with vast quantities of munitions and stores. Given ordinary prudence and intelligence, they were now sure of final success. Yet on the whole, they had small reason to feel pleased with themselves.

It was thanks in great measure to luck that any of them were on shore. In his journal Amherst represents everything as happening according to plan; but Wolfe had no illusions and was more honest. "We made," he wrote, "a rash and ill-advised attempt to land, and by the greatest of good fortune imaginable we succeeded." "Our landing," he told Sackville, "was next to miraculous. . . . I wouldn't recommend the Bay of Gabarus for a descent, especially as we managed it." After his return to England he told Rickson that he had not expected the attempt to succeed, adding "there was no prodigious exertion of courage in the affair; an officer and thirty men would have made it impossible to get ashore where we did." Now it is easy to be wise after the event, but Wolfe's assertion that he disapproved of the plan of landing appears only in a confidential letter to an intimate friend, and it is confirmed in a journal kept by an officer who was present at the siege. Considering, too, that before Amherst's arrival Wolfe had approved an altogether different scheme and that this had been abandoned the day after the expedition reached Gabarus Bay, without any inspection of the landing-places favoured by its authors, we may, I think, ascribe to Amherst personal as well as official responsibility for the arrangements that were actually made. It is necessary to insist on this point because some of Wolfe's detractors have dwelt on the fact that he owed his first success as a director of important operations to a providential accident, which saved him from the consequences of his own folly. For that matter, there was much more than luck in the astonishing course which events took. None but a great leader can snatch victory out of the jaws of defeat. There were probably not half-a-dozen men in the British Army who, at a moment of confusion and disaster, would have instantaneously seized the chance offered by the singular fortune of Lieutenant Hopkins and his companions. Every famous general in history has been amazingly lucky, because only

a general capable of turning his luck to account can ever hope to become famous. It is only, moreover, when troops have the highest trust in their leader that they will follow him on a new enterprise immediately after undergoing a demoralising surprise. So far from tarnishing Wolfe's reputation, the landing at Cormorandière Cove testifies to his possession of several of those qualities which constitute a great commander.

CHAPTER IX

THE FALL OF LOUISBOURG AND THE HARRYING OF GASPÉ, JUNE–OCTOBER, 1758

IN JUDGING the further progress of the operations and Wolfe's views on them, it is necessary to remember that the capture of Louisbourg was not the main object of the expedition. To Pitt the place was little more than a threat to the communications of a force whose real goal was Quebec. It was to conquer Canada, not to reduce an ill-fortified town of 4000 inhabitants that a fleet of 180 sail and an army of 13,000 men had been got together. This Wolfe never forgot, but it seems sometimes to have slipped the memory of Amherst and even Boscawen. Speed was essential. Already the time which Pitt had allowed for taking Louisbourg was overpast. It was of course due mainly to the vagaries of Atlantic weather that Boscawen had been so late; but one would have expected everybody to be eager to make up for lost time. Amherst, however, was in no hurry. The main camp of the British was placed just to the north of Flat Point; it was carefully entrenched, and protected by several blockhouses, apparently as a protection against Indians and irregulars, of whom since Braddock's defeat British troops had gone in terror. It took a long time to land the stores and artillery, and though for about a week after the troops got on shore the weather was generally unfavourable, the ships' logs hardly bear out the dismal account of it in Amherst's journal. It was not until June 11 that any cannon at all were landed, and no heavy artillery was on shore until the 18th. There was similar tardiness with respect to provisions; indeed, stores were still being unshipped in the first week of July. Making full allowance

for the weather, we can hardly escape the conclusion that with a little more vigour and daring the preparations might have been greatly accelerated. It will hardly be credited that it was not till June 17, nine days after the landing, that Amherst surveyed the ground between the camp and the fortress. Wolfe later described the operations which followed the landing as "exceedingly slow and injudicious." Amherst was resolved to make a big affair of the siege and to treat Louisbourg as if it were a first-class European fortress. He was more afraid of defeat than eager for victory.

The success of the British landing had greatly depressed the garrison. The Governor of the island, the Chevalier de Drucour, an honourable, prudent, and brave man — though hardly strong enough for the present crisis — wrote in his journal that, with the British on land and the fortifications almost falling down, everything presaged a speedy surrender. But he knew that the British had designs on Quebec, and he was therefore determined to hold out as long as he could. He had resolved to concentrate the defence on the town itself, and by the 10th the detachments posted at various points round the harbour had been called in. Much was hoped from the ships-of-war in the port, but they caused nothing but embarrassment to the Governor. The Commodore, Des Gouttes, might not sail away without Drucour's permission, but otherwise the squadron was under his control. On the day after the British landed, he asked to be allowed to leave, ascribing his request to the urgent representations of his captains. Though supported by the commander of the troops and the Commissaire-Ordonnateur, his petition was rejected by a council of war. Probably the presence of the ships retarded the siege operations, for the British had a surprising respect for them; but their actual contribution to the defence was small, and Drucour might have been well advised to give them a chance of running the blockade. Two or three of the smaller ships, indeed, had been

allowed to try. The frigate *Bizarre* got through to Quebec, the *Comète* to France. On June 13 the frigate *Echo* tried to follow the *Bizarre*, but five days later she was brought back, having been captured by the *Scarborough* and the *Juno* after a brisk fight. Meanwhile, the fortifications had been patched up as far as possible; houses near the walls had been razed; five companies of rangers were recruited from among the townsfolk; and a vigorous, though unsuccessful sortie had been made by about 300 men. And all this while Amherst had been making a camp, landing guns and stores, and (just at the end) surveying the ground in front of the fortifications.

Wolfe, on the other hand, had been active. On June 10 deserters brought the news that the French had abandoned the Grand or Royal Battery opposite the harbour mouth and the battery on Lighthouse Point commanding it. Amherst was prepared to risk an attack on an unoccupied position, and early on June 12 Wolfe, at the head of a composite force of some 1600 men, marched round the harbour in a fog and established two entrenched camps, one at the head of the north-east arm of the harbour, the other near Lighthouse Point. To the latter guns and supplies were sent by sea. Wolfe forthwith began the erection of a battery. His position was, from a military standpoint, dangerously isolated, though he could rely on a certain amount of support from the fleet. But Wolfe, though impetuous, was not rash. He kept in touch with the camp on the north-east arm of the harbour, and communications between that point and the main camp were very carefully guarded, while hundreds of men were kept working at a road which soon connected all sections of the besieging force. An elaborate system of signals was devised that any detachment suddenly attacked might at once summon help. But in order to do anything effective, Drucour would have needed the hearty co-operation of the French naval officers, and that was not to be expected. After some days of labour,

the Battery on Lighthouse Point opened fire on the night of June 19. While it gave some attention to the ships, its main purpose was the reduction of the defences on the island in the harbour mouth. On the 25th the Island Battery was put out of action.

The firing from Lighthouse Point was found to be ineffective against the French ships, so Wolfe erected a battery half-way between the north-east end of the harbour and the old Grand Battery, and two others near the latter. It was now possible for the British to reach every part of the harbour with their fire. The French were bewildered by the sudden rise of batteries at unexpected points. Wolfe's reputation rose high in the town, where people said that he carried a mortar in one pocket and a 24-pounder in the other. Still, all his activity did not achieve anything decisive. He had probably thought that when the Island Battery was silenced, Boscawen would order some of his ships to enter the harbour. But the French sank four warships and a freighter in the fairway, and though it was afterwards proved that the channel was not blocked, Boscawen was not willing to risk any of his ships in an attempt to enter. His caution is astonishing, for he had a well-earned reputation as a fighter, and he worked very harmoniously with Amherst, winning the enthusiastic praise of Wolfe for the readiness with which he supplied arms, ammunition, gunners, and working-parties of seamen. But many a good sailor, who will face any odds on the high seas, shrinks instinctively from exposing his ships in confined waters to the fire of fortifications on land. There is no doubt, however, that Boscawen could have forced the entrance to the harbour at any time after June 25, and that, had he done so, he would have greatly accelerated the collapse of the defence.

As it was, the defence had hardly been tested, for up to the end of June not a shot had been fired against the fortifications from the landward side. The French were amazed and a little scornful. The truth was that Amherst, counselled by a pedantic

engineer, was scientifically pushing his lines towards the positions he had selected for his batteries. These were over a mile from the main camp; the swampy ground impeded the making of roads, which it was thought necessary to construct as if they were to last for ever. The mistakes made were due partly to an outbreak of small-pox among the carpenters from New England, who could have given good advice on the opening up of new country. There is no need, however, to dwell upon the shortcomings of the British operations. They were nearly all caused by Amherst's determination to have a really first-class siege.

Towards the end of June Wolfe's work brought him into touch with the main advance. He had been acting almost independently, and his letters and reports to Amherst, while civil, were anything but deferential. On July 1, four hundred men of the garrison made a determined sortie, apparently with the object of destroying one or two of Wolfe's new batteries. Wolfe, with an equal force, engaged them, and after a lively fight of two hours drove them back to the town. Pressing after them, Wolfe was able to seize a hillock near the north-east corner of the Barachois or harbour for boats.¹ There he constructed siege works, and four days later he had in position five guns and two mortars, which were within easy range of the French ships and enfiladed the main fortifications from the Dauphin Gate to the Château. Wolfe, we know, had already noted the hillock as a point to be seized, and once again showed his promptness in grasping an unexpected opportunity. As things fell out, the position was gained with slight loss.

Wolfe's little victory was one of the decisive events of the siege. On the next day the five French ships of the line took up stations so close to the town that three of them were aground at low tide. Even there they were within range of Wolfe's new

¹ The hillock must have been close to the site of the present wireless station.

position, and a day or two later 1490 sailors were put ashore, only small parties being left on board. The governor did not approve, but was evidently overruled. At the same time the frigate *Aréthuse*, commanded by Captain Vauquelin, had to withdraw from her station at the western corner of the harbour, whence she had maintained a troublesome fire against Amherst's advance. She was now selected to run the blockade with dispatches for France. This she essayed to do on the night of July 15, and though hit once or twice by the British guns on Light-house Point and pursued by some of Hardy's ships, she successfully accomplished her mission. Her exploits had done a little to redeem the reputation of the French navy.

On July 6, Wolfe's shells began to damage the main fortifications and the town itself. The two biggest buildings naturally attracted most of the fire, and a few casualties were caused in the Hospital. Drucour sent a message to Amherst asking that a place which he proposed to set apart for sick and wounded might be respected by the British gunners. Amherst took counsel with Boscowen and replied that, since no place in the town could be perfectly safe, the incapacitated should be sent to the island in the harbour-mouth, or else one of the French men-of-war should be made into a hospital ship and stationed in the north-east arm of the harbour or near the British ships outside. Drucour rejected these suggestions, and the sick and wounded remained under fire throughout the siege. Wolfe's comment on the French representations is illuminating. "When the French are in a scrape," he wrote to Amherst, "they are ready to cry out in behalf of the human species; when fortune favours them, none more bloody, more inhuman. Montcalm has changed the very nature of war, and has forced us, in some measure to a deterring and dreadful vengeance." Wolfe was of course thinking of the massacre of British prisoners by Indians after the fall of Fort William Henry in the previous year, a catastrophe which

Montcalm had deplored, but which he could probably have prevented and for which the British naturally held him responsible. It is well to remember this allusion of Wolfe's to his future antagonist.

Notwithstanding Wolfe's fierceness, relations between besiegers and besieged remained courteous from beginning to end. Amherst had twice sent Madame Drucour a present of pineapples, and the Governor had replied by gifts of champagne and butter. There had been short truces for the exchange of information about prisoners, and during these the officers of the two sides talked pleasantly together. The personal animosity evidently felt by Wolfe against the French was exceptional.

The demoralising example of the French sailors had not destroyed the spirit of the soldiers. The garrison's outposts were continually attempting small enterprises against the British lines. On the night of the 9th an unusually ambitious sortie was made by 700 men, who attacked the works which the British were constructing near the seashore. They carried two lines of trenches, inflicted a few casualties, and took thirty prisoners; but their own losses exceeded those of the English, and they did little material damage to the hostile positions. They would have been better advised to direct their attack against the opposite wing.

On July 13 Drucour estimated that the garrison had lost 800 men since the beginning of the siege; of these only 178 had been killed or wounded, the remainder being sick, prisoners, or deserters. The bombardment was now so intense that the troops could get no rest. The French guns replied as best they could, but an expert engineer held that the walls suffered more from them than from the British. The plight of the defenders soon became worse. In the night of June 16 a force of British under Wolfe rushed the bridge over the Barachois and established themselves just south of its mouth. In the following days they

pushed their trenches forward, despite a heavy fire, and were soon within 400 yards of the walls. Meanwhile, three new batteries opened fire from Wolfe's old position. On July 22 the long-prepared "main attack" was opened. Two or three batteries on the right wing, not far from White Point, began to bombard the southern part of the fortifications at a range of seven or eight hundred yards. The ground between them and the town was so marshy that troops could hardly have crossed it. It is worth noting that on July 22, the British had playing on the town eight gun batteries, representing thirty-seven pieces, and four mortar batteries, representing eleven pieces. Of these six gun batteries, with twenty-four pieces, had been erected by Wolfe, together with two batteries each containing two mortars; and these figures do not include three batteries of his which had outlived their usefulness.

The approaching end was hastened by a terrible calamity which had befallen the French on July 21. A British shot set fire to some cartridges on the French man-of-war *Célèbre*. The few men on board struggled in vain to quench the flames. Sparks soon fell on the *Entreprenant*, moored close by, and from her the conflagration spread to the *Capricieux*. The British poured a heavy fire on the burning ships, and after blazing all night they drifted, masses of wreckage, to the shore near the Barachois.

The defenders had little leisure to ponder on their loss. For they now had to endure four days of what, for those times, was intensive bombardment. The northern part of the King's Bastion was burned, and the women and children who had taken refuge in the casemates of that work were for a time driven into the open. The barracks at the Queen's Bastion, after having been set alight several times, were at last consumed. Finally, nearly all the guns of the Citadel were silenced. All the while, shot and shell were breaking down the walls and falling into the

town, not a house of which escaped injury. The British had plenty of ammunition and their fire grew hotter and hotter as they erected new batteries nearer to the walls, which were now within range of their muskets. Amherst had ordered the gunners to aim at the fortifications rather than buildings of no military value, but little regard seems to have been paid to this command until the 25th, when the artillery sought to make breaches which would render possible an assault. The bombardment was most effective; great pieces of masonry fell into the moat at every hit. The garrison never faltered. They were short of sleep; the British cannonade prevented them from taking proper meals; ammunition of various kinds was running short. But, animated by the Governor and kindled to enthusiasm by his wife—who visited the ramparts regularly and with her own hands fired three cannon every day—they attempted sorties, they patched up the broken walls, and, if nothing better was to be had, they stuffed the mortars with scraps of iron and loaded the guns with spent British shot. They could not help it that on the evening of the 25th the defences from the Dauphin Gate to the King's Bastion had only five guns capable of replying to Wolfe's fire.

All this while there were in the harbour the *Prudent*, with seventy-four guns, and the *Bienfaisant*, with sixty-four. Properly served, they might still have retarded the British, and in spite of the deplorable conduct of their officers, the troops and townsfolk seem throughout to have derived much comfort from their presence. But that night a flotilla of small craft from the British fleet stole into the harbour. The *Prudent*, aground near the quay, was surprised; the men on board were seized; and the ship was set on fire and soon consumed. The *Bienfaisant* was taken after a short fight, and towed away to the north-east arm of the harbour. It is clear that inadequate watch had been kept on both ships, and all the officers on the *Prudent* were in the

boatswain's store-room when the English boarded her; but the army officers of the garrison rather exaggerated the disgrace of being the victims of a cutting-out expedition, a fate that not infrequently befell men-of-war in those days and long afterwards. The wonder is that Boscawen had not attempted the enterprise before.

The British fleet might now enter the harbour with little risk. At daybreak, moreover, the bombardment was resumed, and the French at once found that a new battery, two hundred yards from a ruinous piece of wall, was in action. There were bad breaches at several points between the Dauphin and King's Bastions, and the latter was hardly defensible. The leading officers of the garrison learned that only three guns could fire effectively. The British were preparing for an assault, which would expose the civilian population to much violence and loss. It was resolved to ask for terms, and a letter was sent to Amherst just as he and Boscawen were dispatching to Drucour a demand for surrender. The reply of the admiral and the general was that the garrison must surrender at discretion, place itself, that is to say, at the disposal of the victors. Horrified at the idea of such humiliation, Drucour and his military advisers authorised an officer to beg Amherst to mitigate his conditions; but he was peremptorily told that the surrender must take place in half an hour. A further emissary, who was to ask for an extension of time, was forced by Whitmore to return to the town with his plea unrepresented. Meanwhile the army officers had been trying to choose a place for a last stand, and they now sent the first messenger to tell Amherst that the town would abide the assault. But then Prévost, the Commissaire-Ordonnateur, presented to Drucour a petition setting forth the civilian point of view, arguing that the inhabitants had suffered enough and that if their interests were ignored, it would be impossible in future to induce Frenchmen to settle in the colonies. The Governor and his counsellors had clearly

lost their nerve; they accepted Prévost's reasoning; and two officers went hurrying off to overtake the messenger and submit the town to Amherst's clemency. They arrived in time: Amherst agreed that the phrase "at discretion" should be changed to "as prisoners of war." Combatants were to be sent to England; non-combatants to France; the whole island and also Ile Saint-Jean (now Prince Edward Island) were to be handed over to the British; Indians and Canadians were to be at the mercy of the victors. The envoys vainly made a last plea for some modification; it was promptly refused, with a threat to renew the bombardment in fifteen minutes. The terms were signed. The civilians, who had behaved admirably during the siege, cannot be blamed for showing their relief. Many of the troops, on the other hand, were furious with Drucour; there was nearly a mutiny among the officers, and the men of the Cambis regiment broke their muskets and burned their colours. But they could not escape the ceremony which took place at noon next day, when in the presence of a force of British, some two thousand French soldiers laid down their arms. The British fleet came into the harbour on July 29, and immediate arrangements were made for transporting the prisoners. Nearly all the garrison had sailed on British ships by the middle of August. They numbered 349 officers, 3498 soldiers and sailors fit for duty, and 1790 sick or wounded. The civilians were shipped soon afterwards. Three hundred of them perished through the foundering of their ship about 100 miles from the English coast, the crew actually taking to the boats and leaving them to their fate. Four regiments were stationed as a garrison in the town; but to render it useless in the event of its recovery by the French, Pitt decided to destroy the fortifications and to spoil the harbour. How artificial had been the life of the place is shown by the fact that it soon fell into ruins. The modern town called Louisburg stands on a different site, and of the French settlement and its defences naught remains save a few

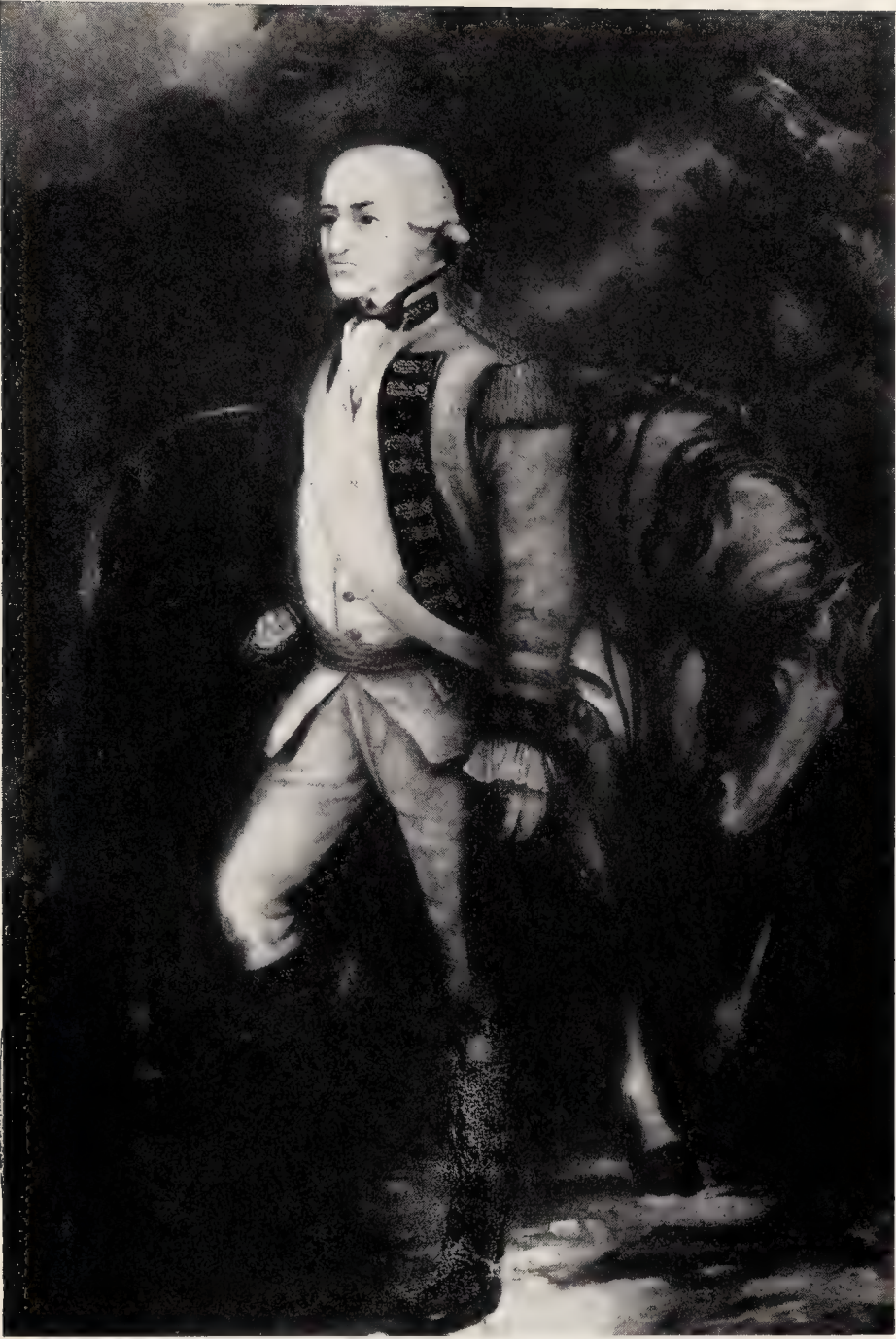
grassy mounds and ridges, with here and there some pieces of masonry, only one or two of which are more than shapeless ruins. The history of Louisbourg is indeed a strange one. It rose and fell in less than fifty years. It flourished only two hundred years ago, and now it is a hunting ground for archæologists. It is a striking illustration of the truth that the content of a country's history is not to be estimated by time. Processes which in the Old World have taken millenniums may in the New require no more than a generation. Even in western Canada the ephemeral existence of Louisbourg is not without parallel.

The British found in Louisbourg 218 guns and eighteen mortars, with great quantities of ammunition and other military material. Many of the guns, however, were unfit for use. It was the place itself, not what it contained, that mattered. Its capture caused enthusiastic rejoicing, the occasional extravagance of which may be pardoned when we remember that there had been little for the British people to rejoice about since the beginning of the war. The colours of the French regiments were deposited in St. Paul's; medals were struck to commemorate the victory; Boscawen and Amherst received the formal thanks of Parliament. The colonists in America were more exuberant. Halifax drank 60,000 gallons of rum; Boston had "a stately bonfire"; New York concentrated on a great official dinner; while Philadelphia specialised in fireworks. General Abercromby, who was in low spirits, having himself been defeated, simply ordered his men to thank God.

There was one man who was not at all satisfied with what had been done. Wolfe was always thinking of Quebec. We have already seen how he chafed at the slow progress of the siege. He maintained that a squadron of men-of-war could have reduced Louisbourg, and that Amherst's army, once it had become acquainted with the character of the neighbourhood, might have finished its task in ten days. But he clung to the hope that Que-

bec might be taken before winter. He urged on Amherst the necessity of prompt action; but Amherst, while protesting his own eagerness, said that Boscawen did not think the voyage practicable, considering the season, a shortage of provisions, and the need of replacing the anchors and cables of the transports. By August 7 Wolfe recognised that Drucour had saved Quebec for that year. What he now feared was that Amherst would do nothing at all. Writing to his father, he said, "We are gathering strawberries and other wild fruits of the country, with a seeming indifference about what is doing in other parts of the world." How strong his feelings were is betrayed by a letter which he addressed to Amherst on the following day. Alike for its tone and its suggestion, it is worth quoting at some length. "All accounts agree that General Abercromby's army is cut deep,¹ and all the last advices from those parts trace the bloody steps of those scoundrels the Indians. As an Englishman, I cannot see these things without the utmost horror and concern. We all know how little the Americans are to be trusted; by this time, perhaps, our troops are left to defend themselves, after losing the best of their officers. If the Admiral will not carry us to Quebec, reinforcements should certainly be sent to the continent without losing a moment's time. The companies of Rangers, and the Light Infantry, would be extremely useful at this juncture; whereas here they are perfectly idle, and like the rest, of no manner of service to the public. If Lawrence has any objection to going I am ready to embark with four or five battalions, and will hasten to the assistance of our countrymen. I wish we were allowed to address the Admiral, or I wish you yourself, Sir, would do it in form. This damned French garrison takes up our time and attention, which might be better bestowed upon the interesting affairs of the continent. The transports are ready and a small convoy would carry a brigade to

¹ The reference is to its disastrous repulse by Montcalm at Ticonderoga.



X. BRIGADIER-GENERAL THE HON. JAMES MURRAY

Painted in 1782 by the American artist, John Trumbull. The original is owned by Dr. J. Clarence Webster.

Boston or New York. With the rest of the troops we might make an offensive and a destructive war in the Bay of Fundy and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. I beg pardon for this freedom, but I cannot look coolly upon the bloody inroads of those hell-hounds the Canadians; and if nothing farther is to be done, I must desire leave to quit the army." It should be explained that Lord Ligonier, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, had told Wolfe that he might return to England when the expedition had concluded its operations. The closing words of Wolfe's letter are thus less unreasonable than they may appear. Still, his tone throughout is strident, peremptory, and not a little insolent. We must remember, however, that the two men knew each other well, and no doubt Amherst made allowances for Wolfe's idiosyncrasies, for he returned a soft answer, in which he said that he had already come to the same conclusions as Wolfe, adding drily, "My wishes are to hasten everything for the good of the service, and I have not the least doubt but Mr. Boscawen will do the same. Whatever schemes you have, or information that you can give, to quicken our motions, your communicating them will be very acceptable, and will be of much more service than your thoughts of quitting the army, which I can by no means agree to, as all my thoughts and wishes are confined at present to pursuing our operations for the good of his Majesty's service, and I know nothing that can tend more to it than your assisting in it." Most readers will agree that Amherst scored; but at the same time one suspects that his subsequent doings were much accelerated by Wolfe's importunity.

In the second half of August Amherst sailed south with six regiments to reinforce Abercromby. Small expeditions went to reduce the French settlements round the Bay of Fundy and on Prince Edward Island. And on August 29 there sailed from Louisbourg three regiments, with four light guns and two howitzers, their commander being Wolfe. They filled six transports

and were escorted by six ships of the line, two frigates, and a fireship under Sir Charles Hardy. On September 4, they anchored in Gaspé Bay, at the eastern extremity of the peninsula of that name. Wolfe landed with a party of troops; a camp was formed; the town of Gaspé was occupied; and the neighbouring country was searched for the inhabitants and their property. A dispatch of Boscawen's states that in and around Gaspé Bay the sailors and soldiers between them destroyed or seized about 250 shallops, burned fifteen houses, destroyed 6000 quintals of fish, a considerable quantity of stores, nets, and other gear, and carried off 37 prisoners, including one woman and one child. These operations, which are said to have received some slight assistance from the widow of the seigneur of Gaspé, who had lately died, were completed by September 12. Colonel Murray was sent with rather more than a third of the troops to Miramichi, now in New Brunswick, where he destroyed all the houses he could find, "a good stone church," 16,000 quintals of fish and many stores, taking off some of the inhabitants. He then sailed back to Louisbourg. Meanwhile, another detachment had been ordered to destroy Grand' Rivière, Pabos, and other settlements on the Baie des Chaleurs. Here they wrought great havoc, especially at Grand' Rivière, where the timidity of the captain of the escorting frigate gave them too little time for their task, so that they felt obliged to burn property indiscriminately. On their return, Wolfe, fearing that the people of the place would perish in the winter, sent a boat manned with Frenchmen to the seigneur, saying that if he feared starvation, he and his people would be taken prisoners, but that, if he preferred liberty, he might keep the boat, whose crew could go free. No answer was received, but one wonders how the unfortunate settlement fared next winter, for Boscawen's report says that at Grand' Rivière there were destroyed sixty houses, eighty shallops and boats, eight stacks of fish, and all the stages and nets,

while it appears from another source that the people had grown nothing but turnips and cabbages, and the authorities in Quebec had ceased to supply them with grain. While these things were happening a party went to Mont Louis, on the St. Lawrence, going along the shore on foot, a very arduous journey, though they returned in some of the boats they had seized and a sloop from Quebec which they enticed into Mont Louis harbour. At Mont Louis there was the usual burning and destruction, but it differed from the other places visited in yielding some military booty — six guns, a barrel of powder, four barrels of musketballs, two drums, and a pair of colours.

From passengers on the sloop it was learned that the French admiral Du Chaffault was even then sailing down the river with six ships of the line, two frigates, and three or four merchantmen, bound for France by way of the Belle Isle Straits. Wolfe, who was utterly bored with the pettiness of his task, wanted Hardy to sail towards Quebec; but Hardy, who was clearly frightened of the St. Lawrence, would do no more than cruise for a few days between Gaspé and Anticosti, and about the time when Chaffault was to be expected, he returned to Gaspé Bay, where he remained till the 27th, when, all the troops having been embarked, the whole force sailed away, arriving at Louisbourg on the 30th.

“We have done a great deal of mischief, — spread the terror of his Majesty’s arms through the whole gulf; but have added nothing to the reputation of them.” So wrote Wolfe to Amherst on the day of his return to Louisbourg. He hinted plainly that the navy had not given him the support he required, and declared that the equipment provided had been “very improper for the business,” the main ground of complaint, it seems, being the lack of small boats. One object of the enterprise had been to collect information about the navigability of the Lower St. Lawrence and adjacent harbours. The bays of Gaspé and Mira-

richi had been fairly thoroughly explored; but the information gained proved of small advantage in the attempt against Quebec next year, while the nervousness of Hardy prevented the discovery of anything valuable about the St. Lawrence. Altogether, it was an undertaking that might well have been omitted.

Knowing of no reason why he should remain in America, Wolfe sailed for England with Boscawen in the *Namur*. Off Cornwall, they fell in with seven French men-of-war, apparently part of Chaffault's squadron from Canada. The *Namur* had but one consort, but Boscawen on the high seas was a different man from Boscawen within the three-mile limit, and he attempted to bring the enemy to action. The French, however, wanted to go home, and the approach of night enabled them to get away after only a few shots had been exchanged. Without further adventures Wolfe landed at Portsmouth on November 1.

Wolfe found himself a famous man in England. It was generally believed that his activity had been the principal cause of the surrender of Louisbourg in what most people considered a short time. Parliament might thank Amherst, but to nearly everyone the hero was Wolfe. The public often makes absurd mistakes in choosing objects of worship, especially in time of war; but in this instance, it showed better judgment than usual. Wolfe's admirers indeed, frequently made ridiculous claims on his behalf, as when his aide-de-camp, Captain Bell, alleged that if Hardy had followed Wolfe's advice, Quebec would have fallen that autumn. But on the whole, what is said about Wolfe by contemporary writers on the siege of Louisbourg is borne out by the evidence of indisputable facts. All the really vital damage to the town was done by batteries erected under his personal supervision and, so far as we can tell, at his initiative. All his operations were conducted with an admirable mixture of dash and circumspection. He distinguished himself by his personal bravery; he showed an uncanny readiness to grasp a sud-

den opportunity. Yet he never took a new step unless he was prepared to hold his gains; in his precautions against surprise he was at times almost over-scrupulous; and his advances were controlled by a scientific calculation of the potentialities of the artillery at his disposal. One is struck, too, by the speed with which he had adapted himself to the type of fighting which the conditions required, so different from the rigid and formal manœuvres of European warfare.

The Gaspé expedition was one of the least pleasant tasks which Wolfe was ever called upon to perform. His allusions to it show that he disliked it; but it must not be supposed that he considered it unjustifiable or unnecessary. It was the paltriness of the work that disgusted him. That he had no misgivings in treating war as war he showed in this campaign as in all the others in which he had a share. If no military end were prejudiced thereby, he would be polite and considerate. On the day after the surrender of Louisbourg he wrote thus to his mother: "I went into Louisbourg this morning to pay my devoirs to the ladies, but found them all so pale and thin with long confinement in a casemate, that I made my visit very short. The poor women have been heartily frightened, as well they might; but no real harm, either during the siege or after it, has befallen any. A day or two more, and they would have been entirely at our disposal. I was determined to save as many lives, and prevent as much violence as I could, because I am sure such a step would be very acceptable to you and very becoming." There is Wolfe's whole attitude in a sentence or two. He wants no avoidable bloodshed, and is glad the women are safe. But if Louisbourg had been stormed, the women to whom he was so courteous "would have been entirely at our disposal"—that followed as a matter of course.

Wolfe's criticism of the conduct of the siege has already been noticed. It would be wrong to infer that he tried to bring dis-

credit on Amherst. To him he sometimes spoke bluntly, of him he generally spoke well. For what was amiss in the operations he never expressly blames his commander. On the other hand, he commends his industry, and wishes that Abercromby had behaved with half Amherst's prudence and caution. Boscawen he speaks of with great respect and admiration. Naturally the news of Abercromby's defeat called forth some strong language, mingled with regrets for the brilliant Lord Howe, who had fallen at the beginning of the attack on Ticonderoga. "The bravest, worthiest, and most intelligent man among us," "the noblest Englishman that has appeared in my time, and the best soldier in the army"—so Wolfe spoke of him, adding that he himself would have been happy to serve under him. If Wolfe was a little censorious, he did not stint praise when he felt it to be due. Nor was he vindictive. In an earlier campaign he had quarrelled with the Hon. James Murray, who was now a lieutenant-colonel, serving with the Louisbourg expedition. In a letter to Sackville Wolfe goes out of his way to write, "Murray, my old antagonist, has acted with infinite spirit. The public is indebted to him for great services in advancing by every method in his power the affairs of this siege. Amherst no doubt will do him all manner of justice, and your lordship will get him a regiment or the rank of colonel." Whatever might be the defects of Wolfe's temper, he was singularly free from petty jealousies and resentments. The power which he could now exercise would not be used for small or selfish ends.

At the end of the siege Wolfe told his father that he had been very well since he landed. Still, he had no wish to stay in America, though just before sailing he assured Amherst that he would gladly return to serve under him in an "attempt to cut up New France by the roots." He had conceived a violent dislike for the Americans. On first seeing the Rangers from Massachusetts, he considered that they looked "little better than

canaille.” After the siege was over he told Sackville that “the Americans are in general the dirtiest, most contemptible cowardly dogs that you can conceive. There is no depending upon them in action. They fall down dead in their own dirt and desert by battalions, officers and all. Such rascals as those are rather an encumbrance than any real strength to an army.” Now it must not be thought that Wolfe was alluding to the two battalions of the 60th regiment, known as the Royal Americans, that had taken part in the siege; they were regular troops, and there is no reason to suppose that they had not behaved as well as their comrades. Nor is it certain that Wolfe had in mind the irregular Rangers whom he had earlier called *canaille*. They certainly had not been deserting by battalions, for there were only 500 of them at the start. Moreover, they had formed part of the force which landed at Coromandière Cove, where they are said to have acquitted themselves well; and they served under Wolfe during part of his operations around Louisbourg harbour. He told Amherst that they were better for ranging and scouting than either work or sentry-duty; but as their proper work was ranging and scouting, this report can hardly be regarded as unfavourable. Wolfe, furthermore, when laying down the law to Amherst as to what ought to be done after the siege was over, urged that the Rangers should be sent to re-inforce Abercromby, to whom they would be “extremely useful at this juncture.” It seems improbable, therefore, that in the remarks which he made to Sackville, Wolfe was thinking of the American troops with whom he was personally acquainted. The sentences quoted come at the end of a passage about the defeat of Abercromby, and the context, as well as the considerations just noted, suggests that Wolfe was repeating what he had heard about the behaviour of the American militia and Rangers in the Ticonderoga campaign and in previous operations in the same region. There is a good deal of evidence which lends colour to his opinion, and

it will be recalled that Commodore Warren spoke in equally contemptuous terms of the New Englanders who took part in the first siege of Louisbourg. Still, a condemnation based merely on hearsay has no independent value of its own.

Notwithstanding Wolfe's aversion to America and the Americans, he had a just sense of their importance. He had been thinking about the significance of the work on which he was engaged, and his conclusions reveal a breadth of outlook and a range of imagination which could be attained by few Englishmen of that day. Writing to his mother on August 11, he tells her of the depressing climate of Cape Breton, but then explains that the British colonies extend so far south that without leaving British territory a man may live "in perpetual spring or summer," and that, too, in conditions which are healthy and pleasant. "These colonies," he continues, "are deeply tinged with the vices and bad qualities of the mother-country; and, indeed, many parts of it are peopled with those that the law or necessity has forced upon it. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, and notwithstanding the treachery of their neighbours the French, and the cruelty of their neighbours the Indians, worked up to the highest pitch by the former, this will, some time hence, be a vast empire, the seat of power and learning. . . .

"Nature has refused them nothing, and there will grow a people out of our little spot, England, that will fill this vast space, and divide this great portion of the globe with the Spaniards, who are possessed of the other half." Wolfe himself was to do as much as any man towards the fulfilment of his prophecy.

CHAPTER X

ONE OF PITT'S MEN, NOVEMBER, 1758- FEBRUARY, 1759

WOLFE'S punctilious regard for professional duty was never more strikingly illustrated than when he landed in Portsmouth on his return from Louisbourg. He had been appointed to act as brigadier in a particular service. That service was accomplished, and he was now simply colonel of the 67th Foot, to which he had been formally gazetted in the preceding April. It was thus his duty to be with his regiment, which happened to be at Salisbury. To Salisbury Wolfe accordingly went; but his application for leave was at once granted and by November 17 he was at Blackheath with his parents.

In London Wolfe found his praises in everyone's mouth. He was, however, concerned to hear that Pitt had meant him to stay in America, his orders to that effect having reached Louisbourg after Wolfe's departure. Wolfe immediately wrote to the Minister explaining his behaviour and assuring him that he had "no objection to serving in America, and particularly in the river St. Lawrence, if any operations are to be carried on there." The letter completely removed any annoyance that Pitt might have felt and confirmed him in his resolve to employ Wolfe on work of the highest moment.

Notwithstanding his assertions to Pitt, Wolfe did not want to go back to America. "It is my fortune," he said, "to be cursed with American service." His own inclinations were turned towards Germany, where his old regiment, the 20th, was now fighting. His reluctance to recross the Atlantic was probably due in

great measure to the poor state of his health, which had apparently become worse since the fall of Louisbourg. In his letter to Pitt he asked that, before being given further employment, he might be allowed "a sufficient time to repair the injury done to my constitution by the long confinement at sea." His parents, it is true, thought him looking well, but early in December his officers at Salisbury remarked his unusual pallor and lack of briskness. He told Rickson that he had offered his "slight carcass" to Pitt, adding that he was "in a very bad condition both with the gravel and rheumatism," but would rather die than refuse any chance of service. One gathers that his stay in England did him little good. On the eve of his departure for Canada, he wrote, "A London life and little exercise disagrees entirely with me, but the sea still more. If I have health and constitution enough for the campaign, I shall think myself a lucky man; what happens afterwards is of no great consequence."

After writing his explanatory letter to Pitt, Wolfe went back to Salisbury. The 67th Foot had been recruited by himself in 1756 as a second battalion of the 20th. Wolfe, as we have seen, had been pleased with it, and it long had a high reputation for the excellence of its drill and discipline—thanks, as its colonel said ten years later, to the maintenance of Wolfe's methods. On this occasion Wolfe saw little of it, as after a few days he bade farewell to officers and men, and travelled by post-chaise to Bath.

At Bath Wolfe took lodgings in Queen Square, "to be more at leisure, more in the air, and nearer the country." His ostensible reason for going to Bath was his poor state of health; but it must have mitigated his sufferings to find there Miss Katharine Lowther, daughter of Robert Lowther, sometime Governor of Barbados, and sister of Sir James Lowther, who afterwards became Earl of Lonsdale. Wolfe had met Miss Lowther when at Bath in the previous winter, and had been attracted by her. Whether he had made any formal advances to her we do not

know. Probably he had not, but on this occasion, he acted with the impetuosity he had shown at Louisbourg, and in a few weeks they were betrothed. The lady was beautiful, Wolfe was a hero. Her family was not disposed to object to one who promised to become a world-renowned general. The only obstacle to the course of love was Mrs. Wolfe, whose capacity for causing unpleasantness increased with years and practice. What she had against Miss Lowther, who belonged to one of the most influential families in the north of England, has never been discovered. That her hostility was strong and bitter is, however, evident from a letter which the girl wrote to her on hearing of Wolfe's death. Doubtless her anger was redoubled when she realised that this time her son meant to disregard it. The engagement was perhaps not publicly announced, but that the two considered themselves pledged to each other there can be no doubt. Nevertheless, we know little of the feelings of either. They exchanged portraits and gave each other presents. But Wolfe's letters to Katharine no longer exist, and the only extant reference to her in his handwriting occurs in his will, from which nothing can be inferred as to the warmth of his affection. As for Katharine, the letter referred to above, though dignified and pathetic, suggests that she possessed a self-command very rare in young ladies of that time. She afterwards became Duchess of Bolton, gave away Wolfe's picture, and destroyed his letters and presents.

Wolfe's stay in Bath was interrupted by a summons to Hayes, the country home of Pitt, not far from London. Hastening thither, he was told that he was to command an expedition against Quebec and given full information about the whole plan of next year's American campaign. He asked for a certain number of troops, but was told he could not have so many. He thereupon urged that he might in compensation be allowed to choose his brigadiers and staff, and was given to understand

that his wishes in this regard would be respected. He himself was to have the rank of major-general for the campaign. Pitt would probably have been ready to give him the substantive rank; but to grant such promotion to a young colonel would have caused great jealousy among the older men passed over, and would have shocked and annoyed the Duke of Newcastle and all other jobbers and traffickers in patronage. Though Parliament was now generally willing to do what Pitt wanted, he was partially dependent on the votes of such men, and could not afford to alienate their support. Wolfe therefore undertook his task knowing that if he failed he would probably return to regimental work and never leave it for the rest of his career.

Wolfe was able to spend Christmas in Bath, but on January 5, 1759, just after his thirty-second birthday, he returned to London. From then to the end of the month he was in the capital making preparations for his enterprise. It is surprising to find that he could hardly afford the expense of capturing Quebec. Until he left England he would draw only the pay of a colonel; after that he would indeed be treated as a major-general, but the £2 a day which he would receive in that capacity would be quite inadequate to cover the debts which his position and duties compelled him to incur. He diffidently and apologetically applied to the War Office for assistance, on the ground that his costly preparations were being made in the public interest, and the Government granted him £500, with which he professed to be satisfied. But the evident reluctance with which Wolfe presented his request kindles anew one's admiration for his zeal in a service which exposed him to such humiliation. It was during this winter that there was painted the last portrait of Wolfe by a professional artist. The result, whether true to life or not, was pleasing. The artist wisely showed Wolfe's full face and refrained from displaying the full length of his gawky fig-

ure. Wolfe, moreover, is wearing the conventional wig, which probably suited him better than his own hair. The plan of Louisbourg which he holds in his hand fixes the date of the picture, which is one of the most interesting portraits of Wolfe that we possess. It was indeed a happy stroke of fortune that led to its re-discovery by Dr. Clarence Webster a few years ago.

During this visit of Wolfe's to London there occurred an incident which has given great trouble to his biographers. It is said that just before his departure Pitt invited him to dinner, the only other guest being Lord Temple, a member of the Government and brother-in-law of the host. Late in the evening Wolfe "broke forth into a strain of gasconade and bravado. He drew his sword, he rapped the table with it, he flourished it round the room, he talked of the mighty things which that sword was to achieve." His two companions looked on in silent amazement, and when Wolfe had gone, Pitt, lifting up his eyes and arms, exclaimed, "Good God! that I should have entrusted the fate of the country and of the administration to such hands."

The evidence for the episode is bad. It was first narrated in print by Lord Mahon in his *History of England*, published nearly a hundred years later. Mahon says he had it from his friend Thomas Grenville, who died in 1846 at the age of ninety-one. Grenville had been told the story by Temple, and Temple's reputation for truthfulness did not stand high. We may feel sure that, whatever happened, the tale was improved in the telling, as such tales always are. It is certain, too, that Pitt did not utter the exclamation attributed to him; that great orator could never have perpetrated such a banal anticlimax. And one may reasonably contend that what we otherwise know about Wolfe renders the story incredible. But there seems no good ground for worrying over the incident, still less for attempting to explain it away. Wolfe was no doubt somewhat heated with

wine. Temple, it is true, is reported to have said that he had drunk most sparingly; but Temple's standards and capacity were probably very different from those of the temperate Wolfe. It is not unlikely, too, that Wolfe, a sick man, was slightly feverish. He had spent an exciting evening, his last opportunity of discussing plans with the Minister to whom he owed his advancement; and Pitt, enthusiastic and theatrical, cannot have been a soothing influence. And after all, as Pitt himself proved, strong men are not always silent or even modest. It is quite conceivable that on rising to take his departure, Wolfe, in the emotional stress of the moment, lost his head a little. Perhaps, too, like most Englishmen he wished to avoid anything approaching sentimentalism, and deliberately sought refuge in mock-heroics, which his companions took more seriously than he intended. What actually happened, in fact, can never be known. Nor does it greatly matter; for even if every word of Lord Mahon's story were true, it would scarcely affect an estimate of Wolfe based on a survey of his whole life.

When Wolfe last saw Miss Lowther or his parents we do not know. He never, it seems, said good-bye to his father and mother, for when he was on the point of leaving London, he wrote to Mrs. Wolfe as follows: "The formality of taking leave should be as much as possible avoided; therefore I prefer this method of offering my good wishes and duty to my father and to you. I shall carry this business through with my best abilities. The event, you know, is in the hands of Providence, to whose care I hope your good life and conduct will recommend your son. . . . I heartily wish you health and the easy enjoyment of the many good things that have fallen to your share. My best duty to the General. I am, dear Madam, Your obedient and affectionate Son, Jam: Wolfe."

There is, in truth, no sign here of an unbalanced mind. And, if Wolfe was mad, as someone told George II, the old king was

right in wishing that he would bite some of the other British generals.

Wolfe received his final instructions on February 5, and at once went to Portsmouth. On the 17th he sailed on board the *Neptune*, the flagship of the fleet that was to share the difficulties and credit of the enterprise.

CHAPTER XI

THE QUEBEC EXPEDITION; THE VOYAGE, FEBRUARY-JUNE, 1759

HOWEVER highly we may regard Wolfe's record up to the point to which his career has been traced, his fame will always depend in the main on his achievements in the closing months of his life. And if one is to understand aright the nature of his task and the extent of his success, it is essential to have a clear notion of the military situation in America at the beginning of the year 1759. The operations of the previous summer had on the whole gone badly for the French. It was ominous that, even with Montcalm at their head, they had everywhere been thrown on the defensive. Pitt's threefold attack on Canada had not indeed been successful. Quebec had not been seriously threatened, and the English centre under Abercromby had been roughly flung back. But the fall of Louisbourg, though it might not content Pitt and Wolfe, was a very serious blow to the power and trade of the French; while to anyone with an active imagination their losses on the western wing were still more vital. For in the autumn Forbes had taken Fort Duquesne, the key to the Ohio valley, and thus cut the precious chain which linked Canada and Louisiana; while Bradstreet, with his American irregulars, had invaded Canada proper, destroyed Fort Frontenac (the modern Kingston), deprived the French of their command of Lake Ontario, and severed communications between Montreal and Niagara. The British might thus take up the interrupted conquest of Canada with much better prospects than those of the year before.

The general plan of campaign was not altered. The Ameri-



XI. BRIGADIER-GENERAL THE HON. GEORGE TOWNSHEND
From an engraving after a portrait by Thomas Hudson.

can militia were to resume their operations on the Great Lakes, with a view to reducing the French posts in the Niagara region and along Lake Erie; should they finish this task speedily, they were to turn eastward towards Montreal. Amherst, with a force composed half of regulars and half of militia, was to renew Abercromby's attempt to advance up Lake Champlain and break into Canada along the valley of the Richelieu. And an amphibious expedition was to rendezvous at Louisbourg, whence it would sail direct to Quebec. It was obvious that the threat from this side would compel the French to concentrate the greater part of their forces at Quebec itself. Thus the right wing of the British attack was relatively more important than it had been in 1758, when it was Abercromby who had the chance of destroying the enemy's main army. Nevertheless Wolfe was allotted no more than 12,000 soldiers, fewer than those which had laid siege to Louisbourg. It is evident that Pitt expected Amherst to draw off considerable numbers of Montcalm's men, or else to advance so quickly as to threaten Montreal early in the summer and thus render Montcalm's position hopeless.

Pitt's instructions to Amherst and Wolfe made it clear that, while Amherst remained commander-in-chief in succession to Abercromby, he was to have no control over Wolfe's movements against Quebec. It was his duty to see that the troops selected to serve under Wolfe were punctually at Louisbourg and to take various measures to secure for the force an adequate amount of transport, food, and munitions; but once Wolfe arrived he was to be in independent command until Quebec fell. Even after that he was to use his discretion in initiating further operations in the valley of the St. Lawrence, though of such he was, if possible, to inform Amherst, with a view to securing co-operation. Only when it seemed inadvisable to attempt more in the St. Lawrence valley was Wolfe, having garrisoned the military posts captured, to place what was left of his force at Am-

herst's disposal. It is well to remember that Amherst had no official responsibility for Wolfe's doings before Quebec. It was of course his duty to promote the success of the campaign to the best of his ability; but he had not towards Wolfe that personal obligation which a commanding officer feels towards a subordinate who has got into trouble through carrying out his orders. Would Amherst have acted more vigorously if Wolfe had not been exempt from his control?

During the weeks since he received his command, Wolfe had been giving much thought to the choice of his principal officers. He had asked his friend George Warde to go with him, and Warde, though lieutenant-colonel of a dragoon regiment, was inclined to consent. Why he did not go is not revealed; presumably the authorities insisted that so good a cavalry officer should lead his regiment in Germany, whither it was soon sent. As commander of the first of his three brigades Wolfe successfully suggested the Hon. Robert Monckton, second son of Viscount Galway. He was colonel of the second battalion of the Sixtieth Foot, commonly called the Royal Americans. After serving in the War of the Austrian Succession, he had entered Parliament, but in 1752 he had been sent to Nova Scotia, where he played a prominent and (as far as possible) conciliatory part in the expulsion of the Acadians. In 1755 he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, and he remained at Halifax in that capacity during the siege of Louisbourg, after which he was sent to destroy French posts on and near the Bay of Fundy. His subsequent conduct, though it did not realise Wolfe's expectations, shows him to have been a conscientious and loyal officer. The third brigade was also bestowed in accordance with Wolfe's wishes. Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. James Murray had, as we have seen, earned Wolfe's high approval for his conduct at Louisbourg. He had been entrusted with the direction of almost independent operations during the Gaspé ex-

pedition, and evidently carried them out to his commander's satisfaction. Murray was a Scot, a son of Lord Elibank; as everyone knows, he was destined to become the first British Governor of Canada. He was a sound and competent soldier, sensible rather than clever. Wolfe seems to have had great confidence in him, a confidence which the sequel proved to have been misplaced. Still, Murray could always be relied on to do his military duty, even though he might sometimes try to carry off more than his due share of credit.

The other brigadier was not of Wolfe's choosing. He was Colonel the Hon. George Townshend, son and heir of Viscount Townshend, and thus member of a family with great political influence. He had been aide-de-camp to the Duke of Cumberland but a disagreement with that commander had led to his withdrawal from the army. When Cumberland, after his misfortunes in Germany, ceased to be commander-in-chief, Townshend returned to military service and was promoted to the rank of colonel. Contemporaries have little good to say of him. Horace Walpole describes him as "a very particular young man, who, with much address, some honour, no knowledge, greater want of judgment, and with still more disposition to ridicule, had promised once or twice to make a good speaker." The same writer says that "his proud and sullen and contemptuous temper never suffered him to wait for thwarting his superiors till risen to a level with them." While one must always make allowances for Walpole's uncharitable prejudices—and dislike of the Townshend family was hereditary with him—there is no doubt that the victim of his criticism was vain, arrogant, satirical, self-seeking, and untrustworthy. His portrait betrays the character of the man, with his puffy cheeks and double chin, his heavy eyelids, languid and contemptuous gaze, his sensual and self-complacent mouth. Not that Townshend was a fool. He had a lively if rather malicious wit; he could draw uncom-

monly well; and he had it in him to be a really competent soldier. Of the three brigadiers he was undoubtedly the cleverest and the least pleasant. He was the last person who should have been associated with Wolfe; and how he came to be appointed is a mystery. It was at his own request that he was sent on the Quebec expedition; but it has never been adequately explained why a fashionable man of noble family should have wanted to go to the despised colonial front with a commander younger than himself and socially his inferior. There is some evidence that the proposal was not made entirely on his own initiative, and it may have had a political motive behind it. The Townshends were not members of Pitt's political group; George Townshend was not one of "Pitt's men," and it may have been hoped that he would, in the event of victory, be able to divert to himself some of the credit which seemed likely to be monopolised by Pitt and a few of his special favourites.

What Wolfe thought of Townshend's appointment is not on record. When he knew that Townshend had asked to accompany him and that the army authorities were disposed to consent, he wrote to the prospective brigadier a polite and friendly letter which tells nothing of his own feelings. He was not in a good position to raise objections, since his own suggestions were not always accepted without demur. In particular he had difficulty in securing the post of Quartermaster-General for his friend Lieutenant-Colonel Guy Carleton, whose influence on Canadian history was to be even greater than his own. Carleton had said rude things about the Hanoverian troops, so dear to the King, and it was only after several refusals and by exerting the strongest official influence that Pitt induced George to give way.

The other leading officers were mostly men of distinct ability. The Adjutant-General was Major Isaac Barré, a man whose merits seem to have been first noticed by Wolfe himself. More famous as a politician than as a soldier, he played a question-

able part in the parliamentary intrigues and manœuvres of the reign of George III; but, notwithstanding an uncertain temper, he did his task well in the attack on Quebec. The engineers were under Major Mackellar, an officer who regarded his profession as a science; while the artillery was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Williamson, who had been at the siege of Louisbourg and was a recognised expert on gunnery.

The officers named and the rest of Wolfe's staff were none of them past middle age, and most of them were comparatively young. The three brigadiers were all under forty. But they were all older than Wolfe. Each of them, too, was the son of a lord, and commanded much more social and political influence than he. Each, moreover, was physically more robust — a consideration of far more practical importance then than now. It is plain that Wolfe would have no easy task in handling his own subordinates; and it was indeed fortunate that he had been allowed such freedom in choosing them. Had there been two or three Townshends, instead of one, the expedition would most likely have broken down without sighting Quebec.

Monckton, Murray, and most of the officers chosen for Wolfe's staff were in America during the winter. So were the troops who were placed under his command. They consisted of ten battalions of infantry of the line, nine of which had been at the siege of Louisbourg, together with six companies of American Rangers and some detachments from the Louisbourg garrison, about which more will be said later. Transport vessels with a total tonnage of 20,000 tons were chartered and sent to New York, Amherst being ordered to provide 6000 tons more from the American colonies. The artillery, stores, and food, were provided partly in England, partly in America, and at Wolfe's advice Amherst was instructed to send to Louisbourg molasses sufficient to make a six months' supply of spruce beer, together with rum for the same length of time. A vast number of small craft

— schooners, cutters, whale-boats, and flat-bottomed boats — were collected, apart from the ordinary boats of the transports and the men-of-war. Few military expeditions have been better equipped.

Nevertheless, the excellent soldiers which Wolfe was to lead would have been impotent but for the navy. It was not merely that the navy had to possess command of the sea before it was possible in time of war to send armies across the Atlantic. It was not merely that this particular force had to be convoyed by the navy all the way to its objective. What must be understood is that during the whole time that the army was before Quebec, it was dependent in all its doings on the assistance of the fleet. At Louisbourg the part of the fleet had been of the highest moment; without it the siege could not have been undertaken at all. But once the troops, with their guns and stores had been landed, the navy did little that directly contributed to the fall of the town; indeed, had the ships sailed away, the army could have reduced Louisbourg about as quickly as it did. The same cannot be said of the siege of Quebec. Had the fleet deserted it, the army would at once have been crippled and in danger of destruction.

It is necessary therefore to give some attention to the naval side of the undertaking. At the beginning of 1759 the British command of the sea was not undisputed, but it was well-nigh assured. Yet the superiority of the British navy was not so complete as we are apt to assume. In many respects the French had the advantage. They were undoubtedly better than the British in naval construction; British captains were always delighted to get the command of a French prize. The difference was not merely in design; it appeared in material of all kinds — timber, tackle, and rigging. Nor were British naval guns or gunnery notably better than French. The first reason for British supremacy at sea was simply numbers: at the beginning of the

Seven Years' War, Great Britain had in commission seventy-two ships of the line, France thirty-four. If all resources in ships be taken into account, the British navy was more than twice as strong as the French. Third in strength was the navy of Spain; if it had been added to that of France—as it was late in the war—the British navy would have been half as strong again as the two combined. Still, numbers are not everything, and the quality of the French ships might have told more had it not been for the inferiority of the French in men. In the first place the seafaring population of England was much greater in proportion to the number of her ships-of-war than was that of France. No matter what losses the British suffered there were always suitable reserves. But as a war went on, France had to replace many of her lost sailors with landsmen. Moreover, there seems no doubt that on the whole the seamanship of the British sailor was better than his opponent's. One must indeed guard against conceiving a sentimental admiration for him based on the sea-songs of landsmen, such as "Black-eyed Susan," "Hearts of Oak," or the later absurdities of Dibdin. The British tar of Wolfe's day was no soaring soul; he was more likely a foul-mouthed, drunken, dissolute ruffian. Nor was he the smart, neat, clean sailorman of the picture-books; uniforms for the men had scarcely been suggested, and no captain insisted upon their being worn, with the result that a ship's company presented a grotesque, shabby, and sometimes even ragged appearance. The men were ill-paid, ill-fed, ill cared for. The amount of sickness among them was appalling; there was no medical examination of recruits, few of the principles of sanitation were known and those few seldom observed, the naval hospitals, whether afloat or ashore, were inadequate in number and woefully deficient in staff and equipment. Thus the mortality in the fleet was terrible. An official return states that during the Seven Years' War 184,893 seamen and marines were employed in the

British Navy. Of these 1512 were killed in action or by accident: 133,708 died of sickness or were missing. It is true that the missing out-numbered those who were known to be dead, numerous as these were. But this fact reminds us of another unpleasant feature of the times. The "missing" were mostly deserters. Many a sailor had joined the navy through the press-gang. A very high proportion of the men hated their lot and escaped from it at the first opportunity. A consequence of this discontent was that discipline was brutal. It was not exactly strict, for in certain directions the men were allowed a licence that would not be tolerated now. But when a rule was broken, punishment was severe; the cat-o'-nine-tails and the tar were on intimate terms in the eighteenth century. As it was thought impossible to make the men contented with their life, they were to be deterred from trying to leave it by fear of the retribution that would follow recapture. As for those who stuck to their duty and escaped death, it was only too likely that they would be discharged at the end of the war; at any rate, they would be cast off if they outlived their usefulness; so that they had nothing to count on but an old age of beggary. And yet these men, disreputable, maltreated, discontented to the verge of mutiny, always acquitted themselves well when given something important to do. They understood their calling; they fought splendidly; they turned their hands with zeal to any unwonted task, whether by sea or on land. At Louisbourg Wolfe highly praised the work they had done in landing stores, digging trenches, and preparing batteries, in addition to their proper naval functions, and at Quebec the help which they were to give to the army was still more notable.

One reason why the common sailors, for all their dislike of the service, usually performed their duties with energy and efficiency was that every one of them had a chance of high promotion. Many an officer on the quarter-deck had, as the saying

went, entered the ship through the hawse-hole. Warren, who commanded the fleet at the first siege of Louisbourg, was a case in point. Now the French navy was much less democratic; the officers almost all came from noble families, and between them and the lower deck a great gulf was fixed. At the same time, the French navy did not attract the best of the French aristocracy. It was always treated as though it were subsidiary to the army; and it was the army which offered the most alluring opportunities to the young nobleman eager to gain distinction in the service of his country. In England the navy was the Senior Service. The people were proud of it; while the army was still regarded with lingering suspicion as a potential instrument of tyranny. You were more likely to become a national hero in the navy than in the army. So there were always in the navy plenty of young men of real promise, drawn from good families with a tradition of naval service going back for generations. Men like these took to the sea by a kind of instinct; their seamanship was born with them. Not that the navy lacked bad officers. In time of war it was generally discovered that the establishment of many ships was incomplete, and a number of new officers had suddenly to be found in the merchant service. Such men were often uneducated and uncouth, and sometimes brought disgrace on their ships, even in action. But on the whole, though an officer's life was hard and barbarous, especially at the beginning, the British quarter-deck knew its job and did it. A British captain, furthermore, rarely forgot that his first duty was to destroy the enemy. A gallant and successful action was commonly rewarded by promotion to the command of a bigger ship. When Boscawen was awakened one night with the news that two French men-of-war were bearing down on his ship, "What's to be done?" he said as he turned out of his bunk, "why, damn it, fight 'em." And Boscawen became "Pitt's admiral." Byng, on the other hand, shirked action with a French fleet and brought

off his own intact. He was shot. Men like Byng — not that he was a coward — were rare; they became rarer still after his fate. Holburne was no genius, and Boscawen thought meanly of him; but in 1757, as we have seen, Holburne blockaded Louisbourg for weeks with a force inferior to that which lay in the harbour. In due course the French admiral took his ships safely back to France. He was so pleased with himself that he asked to be made a Marshal of France in recognition of his exploits, and though this was refused, he was granted a pension of 12,000 livres a year. Des Gouttes, who commanded the French squadron at Louisbourg in 1758, was not, so far as we can judge, even reprimanded for his conduct; at all events, he remained in the service, and afterwards received promotion. On the other hand, Vauquelin — a man of humble birth — who handled the frigate *Aréthuse* so brilliantly at Louisbourg, and was to gain further glory on the St. Lawrence, never got anything better than the command of a royal freighter. It is no wonder that the English displayed a daring and dash which was often quite absent from the doings of the French. Of course, it is easy for an admiral to take risks when he knows that he has ample reserves behind his particular force; and in behalf of the French it must be said that their instructions often encouraged the belief that their first duty was to avoid loss. But, without trying to apportion praise and blame between the two sides, one must say emphatically that the “will to victory” was present among the men of the British navy to a far higher degree than among their opponents.

For the general efficiency which prevailed in the navy in the year 1759 the credit largely belongs to the head of the Admiralty, Lord Anson. Anson was a practical seaman of the finest type. His voyage round the world in the *Centurion* is one of the classic exploits of the British navy. He had afterwards won a victory or two against the French in the War of the Aus-

trian Succession. From 1751 to 1762 he was First Lord of the Admiralty, save for an interval of a few months, at the end of which he was recalled to office by Pitt. Seldom has the navy had a better administrator at its head. It took him a little time to accommodate himself to Pitt's standards of despatch and punctuality; but after being worsted in one sharp conflict of wills, he worked most loyally and efficiently with the great minister.

One of Anson's gifts was a capacity for recognising a good man, and as a rule the appointments which he recommended were admirable. It was so, at any rate, in the case of the Quebec expedition. Charles Saunders, who was selected to command the fleet and promoted to the rank of Vice-Admiral, was one of those officers who have a high reputation in the service and none outside. He had been round the world with Anson, and in the War of the Austrian Succession had commanded a ship with much distinction under Hawke. He had done well in administrative positions, and in the last two or three years had rendered good service as second-in-command in the Mediterranean. There was nothing showy about Saunders; and as it never was his fortune to command a British fleet in a big battle, he is not one of the admirals that figure in folk-songs or the lays of patriotic poets. But he could be trusted to perform efficiently whatever task was given him to do. What was hardly less important, he was a man of even and accommodating temper — an essential in anyone who was expected to co-operate harmoniously with Wolfe. Saunders' second-in-command was Rear-Admiral Philip Durell, who had done well at the siege of Louisbourg. He was now commanding the British squadron in American waters. Third in command was Rear-Admiral Charles Holmes.

The fleet destined for Quebec was to be the largest on the seas that year. It consisted of twenty-two ships of the line and

twenty-seven smaller vessels, mounting in all 1944 guns. Had the ships' companies been at full strength, they would have totalled 15,000 men; but several vessels were short-handed, and probably the number of men on board did not exceed 13,500. Even that, however, was nearly a quarter of the whole manpower of the British navy at the time. Enough has been said to indicate the nature of the support which Wolfe might expect from the fleet and the vital importance of the naval side of the expedition. It is not suggested, however, that the enterprise was essentially a maritime one. Some modern writers almost imply that Wolfe and his troops were just a big landing-party, intended to occupy ground which the efforts of the ships had already secured. Such a view is no less foolish than the more common disregard of the part played by the navy. It is impossible to transport troops overseas without a predominant navy, but it is foolish to attack land fortifications with ships alone, as we have been painfully reminded in our own time. The truth is that neither Wolfe nor Saunders could have achieved anything without the other. But, once Quebec was reached, it was Wolfe who was the agent and Saunders who was the instrument. And only as long as that relation was maintained could the siege prosper.

Wolfe has sometimes been called a lucky general; but it was seldom that he received much encouragement from the weather. It was Pitt's intention that the fleet and army, having collected at Louisbourg, should depart thence for Quebec on May 7. But though Saunders sailed from Spithead on February 17, and though he had with him only a small squadron, comparatively easy to keep together, it was the latter part of April before he approached Cape Breton. He found (as one generally does in Canada) that the weather had been highly exceptional. The spring was unusually late; the weather was still bitterly cold, so that sails were frozen stiff; and though the land near Louisbourg

was sighted on April 23, access to it was blocked by a great ice-field which extended from Cape Breton itself to the Straits of Canso. Then fog came on, and when after several days it lifted the ice was seen to be still in the way. So there was nothing for it but to make for Halifax, where Saunders arrived on April 30.

Wolfe's health was bad, but he had been cheered to find that he could work well with Saunders. On the whole, too, he was pleased with the state of affairs at Halifax, though many men and supplies had still to be assembled. Writing to Pitt the day after his arrival, he speaks highly of the preparations made by Amherst, Monckton, Murray, and Lawrence, the Governor of Nova Scotia. He was chagrined however, to find at Halifax Durell, whom Pitt had ordered to sail to the St. Lawrence as soon as the river was navigable, with the object of intercepting reinforcements and supplies from France to Quebec. Durell explained that, though he had not received Pitt's instructions till April, he had been ready to put to sea for some weeks, but was waiting to hear if the Gulf of St. Lawrence was clear of ice. It is impossible not to suspect that he was a victim of that superstitious dread of the St. Lawrence which had so afflicted Hardy in the previous autumn. Saunders sent him off at once, Wolfe giving him a detachment of troops which he wanted. He sailed on May 5, and owing to bad weather made but a slow voyage of it. As we shall see, he was too late. Wolfe regarded his dilatoriness very gravely; indeed, he told Amherst that he had little hope of success unless the French succours could be stopped.

On May 13 Saunders left Halifax for Louisbourg, the voyage taking only two days. At Louisbourg Wolfe found a letter telling of the death of his father on March 26. The news was not unexpected, as the old man had been very weak for some time. Writing to his uncle Walter, Wolfe expressed his sorrow at his absence and consequent inability to comfort his mother, "the more so as her relations are not affectionate, and you are too far

off to give her help." He says that he intends to continue all the pensions which his father had bestowed on various kinsfolk. Having dealt with these matters in a single paragraph, he devoted five to an explanation of the purpose and prospects of the expedition.

During the the latter part of May transports and storeships kept arriving at Louisbourg, and at the end of the month only one company of soldiers—American Rangers—was missing. But, instead of the 12,000 who had been allotted to him, the final muster showed that, even with the absent company and the troops sent with Durell, he had at his disposal no more than 9280. So serious was the discrepancy that when it became known in England, expert opinion there considered that Wolfe could not be expected to take Quebec, and that the decisive blow of the campaign must be struck by Amherst. Except that the commander of the Louisbourg garrison had not received instructions to release a company of light infantry which had been promised to Wolfe, all the contingents allotted to the expedition were at Wolfe's disposal or about to join him; the shortage in men was due to sickness and the failure of recruiting to replace the losses of the previous year. Wolfe had a low opinion of the American Rangers in the force; most of them were so bad, he told Pitt, that they could hardly be used unless mixed with other troops. Several transports were missing, their provisions and boats being greatly needed; Wolfe had no money, and Amherst could supply him with none, so that he could not hope to buy provisions from the Canadians or hire their labour; the equipment of three regiments had disappeared. It had been necessary to use various makeshifts and to draw upon the stores at Louisbourg. What was perhaps most serious of all, the start from Louisbourg was made four weeks after the date named by Pitt. Nearly a quarter of the time at Wolfe's disposal had been wasted.

Nevertheless, Wolfe's spirits were good. If his men were few they were mostly of first-rate quality. "Our troops," he told Pitt, "are good and very well disposed. If valour can make amends for want of numbers, we shall probably succeed." This was indeed high praise from Wolfe. Of the officers, naval and military, with whom he had to do, he speaks at this time with moderation and indeed charity, even when they left undone what they ought to have done. That this forbearance was not due to any change in temperament is shown by a letter which just after leaving Louisbourg he wrote to Lord Barrington, the Secretary at War. It was Barrington who in the previous autumn had communicated to him Pitt's instructions to remain in America. The letter reached Louisbourg too late, followed Wolfe to England, failed to overtake him there, and ultimately was sent back again to Louisbourg, where it caught him. With it came a second, written after Wolfe's return to England, for which, it seems, Pitt had blamed Barrington. In reply, Wolfe acknowledges the two letters, "in answer to which," he continues, "I shall only say, that the Marshal [Ligonier] told me, I was to return at the end of the Campaign, and as General Amherst had no other commands than to send me to winter at Halifax under the orders of an officer who was, but a few months before, put over my head, I thought it was much better to get into the way of Service, and out of the way of being insulted; and as the style of your Lordship's letter is pretty strong, I must take the liberty to inform you, that though I should have been very glad to have gone with General Amherst to join the army upon the Lakes . . . yet rather than receive orders in the Government of an officer younger than myself (tho' a very worthy man) I should certainly have desired leave to resign my commission; for as I neither ask nor expect any favour, so I never intend to submit to any ill usage whatsoever." This is sharp speaking, whether Barrington deserved it or not; and it was the height of rashness for an

army officer to use such frankness in a letter to the Secretary at War. It affords excellent evidence of Wolfe's state of mind. As a rule he was civil and deferential in his dealings with superiors, even when he disliked them. But now, he reckoned, neither Barrington nor any of his kind mattered. If Wolfe took Quebec, his future was secure; if he failed, his career was ruined. In the one case a Barrington could not harm him; in the other he could make things no worse. And it is doubtful whether Wolfe expected to return to England alive. He was, we know, very sick, and it is likely that he realised it. At all events, whereas he had rarely referred to his health in his correspondence before this year, he alluded to it in two letters written from Halifax, one of them, to Amherst, being of a semi-official character. He was, it is certain, in a state of high excitement. He had been given his great opportunity, and in his delight he was disinclined to quarrel with those who were associated in any way with him. But he would brook no bullying from pompous politicians; and we can imagine how eagerly he grasped this chance of defying the insolence of office.

Wolfe's wits, though he might be a little overwrought, were as active and alert as ever. During the wait at Louisbourg the troops were repeatedly exercised in landing from the ships. They were also regularly drilled and frequently inspected by the General. In Wolfe's force were three companies of grenadiers formed from certain of the regiments which had taken part in the siege of Louisbourg, where they had been in garrison during the winter. They won special admiration for their smartness and precision on parade, and in the first part of the siege of Quebec were regarded as a *corps d'élite*. Besides exercising his men, Wolfe was continually considering how to preserve their health, which so far was fairly good. He was also much concerned about the maintenance of good discipline on the transports during the tedious voyage up the St. Lawrence. The rela-



By Reynolds Painted
Charles Saunders, Esq.
Commander of the Fleet
The Majesty's

Vice Adm. of the Blue
His Majesty's General of
Marine Forces

XII. VICE-ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES SAUNDERS

From an engraving by J. McArdeU, in the McCord National Museum, McGill University. The original painting was by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

tions between army and fleet had also to be regulated. The following extracts from Wolfe's orders deal with these various topics.

"Halifax, May 5th, 1759. — If the Regts. here have time to put a quantity of spruce-beer into the transports, it would be of great use to the men. [Spruce-beer prevents and cures scurvy] Weak and sickly people are not to embark with their Regts.

"Halifax, May 7th, 1759. — As the Navigation in the River St. Lawrence may in some places be difficult, the troops are to be as useful as possible in working their ships in obedience to the Admiral's commands and attentive to all signals. No boat to be hoisted out at sea but on the most urgent occasions.

"Halifax, May 9th, 1759. — After the troops are embarked, the commanding officers will give all necessary directions for the preservation of the health of their men. Guards must mount in every ship to keep strict orders and to prevent fire. When the weather permits, the men are to eat upon deck, and to be as much in the open air as possible. Cleanliness in the births [*sic*] and bedding, and as much exercise as their situation permits are the best preservatives of health. A Report is to be made by every Regt. and corps in the army, of the No. of men their boats will conveniently hold. . . .

"Louisbourg, May 18th, 1759. Friday. — As the Regts. arrive they are to have fresh beef delivered to them. . . . If there are any lines or hooks to be had from the shore, Captain Leslie will distribute them to the troops.

"Louisbourg, 25th May, 1759. — Commanding Officers of Regts. are to make reports to-morrow morning to the Admiral, the condition of their transports; if any are judged unfit to proceed, or if the men are too much crowded, proper directions will be given thereupon.

"Louisbourg, 29th May, 1759. — When the troops are fixed in the transports for the voyage, every regt. and corps must give

in a return of all their flatt bottom'd boats, whale boats, and cutters, all which are provided by the Government, independent of the transport boats. Every regt. and corps may be provided with lines and hooks by applying to Capt. Leslie, Q. M. General, to-morrow morning.¹

“Louisbourg, 31st May, 1759. — To prevent the spreading of distempers in the transports, the Hospital-ship will receive any men that may fall ill on the voyage.

“As the cutters and whale-boats are meant for the service of the army, they are not to be given to any of the men-of-war without an order in writing from the Admiral.”

Orders like these gave great satisfaction to officers and men, who never object to strictness in details if they feel that the Higher Command is considering their interests. At Louisbourg the greatest confidence and enthusiasm prevailed in both fleet and army. Captain Knox, whose journal is one of the most valuable authorities on the expedition, bears testimony to the “high spirits” of all ranks and the “cordial unanimity” of the admirals and the generals. With the officers the favourite toast was “British colours on every French fort, port, and garrison in America.” The patriotism of the rank and file was so intense that it sometimes required expression in verse. An example of the consequences is the following lyric, often printed before, but worthy of being printed many times again. The poet was Sergeant Edward Botwood of the 47th Foot, commonly called Lascelles’ Regiment.

Come, each death-doing dog who dares venture his neck,
Come, follow the hero that goes to Quebec;
Jump aboard of the transports, and loose every sail,
Pay your debts at the tavern by giving leg-bail;
And ye that love fighting shall soon have enough:
Wolfe commands you, my boys; we shall give them Hot Stuff.

¹ Leslie was acting as Quartermaster-General because Carleton had been sent up the river with Durell.

Up the River St. Lawrence our troops shall advance,
To the Grenadiers' March we will teach them to dance.
Cape Breton we have taken, and next we will try
At their capital to give them another black eye.
Vaudreuil, 'tis in vain you pretend to look gruff, —
Those are coming who know how to give you Hot Stuff.

With powder in his periwig and snuff in his nose,
Monsieur will run down our descent to oppose;
And the Indians will come: but the light infantry
Will soon oblige *them* to betake to a tree.
From such rascals as these may we fear a rebuff?
Advance, grenadiers, and let fly your Hot Stuff!

When the forty-seventh regiment is dashing ashore,
While bullets are whistling and cannons do roar,
Says Montcalm: "Those are Shirley's — I know the lappels."
"You lie," says Ned Botwood, "we belong to Lascelles'!
Tho' our cloathing is changed, yet we scorn a powder-puff;
So at you, ye b—s, here's give you Hot Stuff."

The delay of Durell in blocking the St. Lawrence had enabled Colonel De Bougainville, sent to France for help in the previous autumn, to slip up the river just in time. The moral effect of his success was greater than its material significance; for not only did it hearten the French to know that the enemy's "lines had been penetrated," but the English were much more cast down than they had any need to be. The succour brought by Bougainville was indeed small. His reception in France had been polite, but he was plainly told that one does not trouble about the stable when the house is on fire. France, in fact, had her hands full in Europe; and while she was not indifferent to her colonies, she hoped to save them by a victorious invasion of England. The strategy of this plan was not bad; but in practice it was very unlikely that the British navy could be either defeated or eluded, and it would have been wiser to send a few more men and ships to Canada, where a little might turn the scale. But the Cana-

dians had to be content with 326 men, three frigates, seventeen provision ships, a number of military decorations for those who had or were supposed to have distinguished themselves in the last few years, and some stirring exhortations to hold out and keep for France at least a foothold in Canada until the end of the war. Three days after the last store-ships reached Quebec, the signal fires announced that Durell was in the river.

Each side had now mustered the forces on which it was to rely in the coming struggle. The position and outlook of the defence were strangely compounded of favourable and unfavourable elements. If Canada as a whole be regarded, the French enjoyed the great advantage of interior lines. An attack by converging forces, such as Pitt had planned, is always a delicate and risky enterprise, and the master-strategists of history have performed some of their most spectacular, though not their most difficult, exploits, when defending themselves against such operations. Canada, too, was a country difficult of approach. Save for a few settlements, it was covered with forest, and except in one or two small areas, all communication and transport were by water. All three divisions of the British forces would have to move almost entirely along lakes or rivers; so that the defenders would know exactly where to expect them and would have only three short fronts to hold. If we restrict our view to Quebec, the first and main objective of the forces under Wolfe and Saunders, a cursory glance at the map is enough to show that its position was admirably fitted for defence, provided that the attackers were not in overwhelming superiority of numbers. And at the siege of 1759 the numerical advantage lay with the French, for the total number of armed men who took part in the defence of Quebec was about 16,000. Furthermore, the French had in the Marquis de Montcalm a general who was probably Wolfe's equal in ability, and easily his superior in experience — one, too, who had already gained three victories

over the British and thus possessed in full measure the confidence of his troops. Finally the task of the defenders was very simple and straightforward. Their business was to defend themselves. If they could merely hold out until the end of September, they would have won; for then, if not before, the British ships must sail away, taking the soldiers with them.

But if the French position was in many ways advantageous, it also abounded with drawbacks. In the first place, if we take the whole campaign into account, the British had a great numerical preponderance. Either Wolfe or Amherst, if he acted with vigour, might be more than a match for the entire force of the colony. For the quality of the British troops was on the whole far higher than that of the French. Nearly all Wolfe's men, and half of Amherst's, were regulars. Against this body of 15,000 first-class troops, the French could pit barely 6000. As for the colonial militia, which made up a great part of the forces on each side, there was probably not much to choose in efficiency between the Canadians and the British Americans; both were better at scouting, raiding, and skirmishing than they were in a pitched battle. But the British had far greater reserves of these men. At the utmost Canada could not put into the field more than 22,000, and such a force would include old men and boys. Whereas the British colonies numbered their militiamen by hundreds of thousands; so that casualties could at once be replaced, and a big force kept in the field throughout the summer without imperilling the harvest. It is a commonplace of the text-books that this superiority in man-power was neutralised by the fact that the French enjoyed unity of direction, being all under the command of a general appointed by an absolute king; while the several British colonies were altogether independent of one another and but loosely subject to the British crown; hence it was almost impossible to induce them to put all their strength into a concerted effort, and difficult to secure from any of them steady

support of a British general and regular soldiers. But in the Seven Years' War this contrast was rather theoretical than practical. In the first place, once Pitt was firmly seated in office the direction of the British operations in America was in the hands of a single authority with very clear ideas and intentions. Then, if we take the various armies operating in 1759, we find that there was unity of command in each. Jealousies there might be among Wolfe's brigadiers, but he was commander of the troops sent against Quebec, and none ventured to dispute his orders. The only danger of disharmony lay in the association of army and navy in a joint enterprise; but, as we shall see, that risk was overcome. The French, on the other hand, were torn by envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. In the strict sense of the term, an absolute monarchy cannot exist; and in the eighteenth century the French monarchy, like many before it, sought to maintain its power by delegating its authority piecemeal to a number of agents, each of whom served as a check on the rest. The counterpart of Wolfe is commonly assumed to have been Montcalm; but so far from Montcalm being commander-in-chief of the force defending Quebec, his commission gave him no authority at all over the greater part of it. He was simply in command of the eight battalions of the French army which had been sent to Canada, the total number of which was now about 4000. There were some 1500 other regulars called *les troupes de la marine*, not because they had anything to do with the sea, but because they had been enlisted for service in the colonies, which were under the direction of the Marine Department. They were mostly recruited in Canada, though among both officers and men natives of France were to be found. Then there was the Canadian militia, consisting of all men capable of bearing arms. Finally there were the Indians, whether subjects or allies of the French; they were never numerous, and their numbers varied from campaign to campaign and from

week to week. Now over the Colonial Regulars, the militia, and the Indians Montcalm had no authority at all. And even in relation to the French regulars his will was subject to the control of the Governor-General. "M. de Montcalm," ran the king's instructions, "shall have only to execute and see that the troops under his command execute all the Governor's orders." "Whenever campaign operations shall be in question, the Governor-General shall have the right to determine them alone without consulting any war council or giving any previous communication of his plans." "M. de Montcalm shall always submit to the orders and instructions of the Governor for the movement of detachments or for his own conduct of expeditions." The injunctions quoted, as we shall see, had a very intimate bearing on the fortunes of the siege of Quebec. They left no room for doubt as to the supremacy of the Governor-General in all military matters. There was, indeed, nothing unusual or unwise in this arrangement. It was very proper that ultimate authority should lie with the civil power. It was so, of course, in Great Britain; Wolfe was acting under instructions, which theoretically came from the King, but actually, as all knew, from Pitt. In Canada, however, the situation was mischievous because of the personal characteristics of the leading men concerned. Pitt gave instructions to Wolfe, furnished him with means to carry them out, and left him to use those means as he saw fit. But when the French Minister of War hinted to Vaudreuil that it would be well to put all the forces in Canada under the command of Montcalm, the Governor brusquely refused to do so.

We are thus introduced to the famous quarrel between Montcalm and the Governor-General, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, and to the equally famous quarrel about the merits of that quarrel. In a book primarily concerned with the career of Wolfe, there is fortunately no need to discuss the details of the controversy. The powers of the two men were such that friction could only

have been avoided if each had been a prodigy of patriotism and tact. Not only was that condition far from being fulfilled, but Montcalm and Vaudreuil would have fallen out in any conceivable relationship of life. On the one hand there was the polished gentleman and scholar, with the fiery blood of southern France in his veins—a brilliant and experienced soldier, conscious of his own abilities, impatient of opposition, suffering fools with an ill grace, hasty and bitter of speech, and withal perfectly single in purpose and utterly devoted to his country's service. And over against him was the weak but self-important jack-in-office, Canadian born and fanatically jealous of all who came from Old France, resentful of Montcalm's appointment even before he knew him, not corrupt in the usual sense, not treacherous if by treachery is meant the rendering of help to his country's enemies, but so lacking in moral courage that he condoned corruption which could only lead to Canada's ruin, and so self-centred that he permitted his petty spite to frustrate the well-laid plans of Montcalm for her defence. Time and again had he hampered Montcalm's operations by interference for which the only discernible motive was malice. Time and again had he belittled his achievements and misrepresented his attitude in despatches to the French Government. The year before, the French had fought at Ticonderoga under ambiguous instructions, so worded that Vaudreuil might claim credit for success and blame Montcalm for failure. The victory, too, had been gained with some 3300 French regulars and less than 500 men from all the other resources of Canada. There was no longer any pretence of harmony between the two men. Everyone in Canada knew of the breach. The soldiers from France were for Montcalm, partly because they loved and admired him for his own sake, partly because they were treated by the Canadians in much the same spirit as was shown towards their leader by the Governor-General. But the Colonial Regulars, or *troupes*

de la marine, and the Canadian militia were strongly for Vaudreuil, who was continually flattering them and magnifying their exploits. The Indians, who cared nothing for politics and judged a man as a man, had a very high regard for Montcalm; but their opinions were not of much consequence. In short the defenders of Canada, their loyalty divided, could never use their strength to its full effect.

The lack of harmony between Vaudreuil and Montcalm was not the only scandal in the government of Canada. The whole administration of the colony was rotten with corruption. When, after the British conquest, an enquiry was held in France into the malpractices of Canadian officials, Vaudreuil was acquitted of the charges of peculation and fraud that were brought against him; and his own doings, however foolish, seem really to have been honest in the usual sense of that word. But the fact that he made nothing for himself out of the corruption that was ruining Canada testifies to his stupidity rather than his uprightness. For he must have known what was happening; at least, if he did not, he was the only man in Canada who was ignorant. The chief offender, in fact, was no less a personage than the Intendant, François Bigot. The Intendant was a very great dignitary, scarcely inferior to the Governor-General: he controlled all the finances of the colony, he was responsible for all public works, he arranged all government contracts, he was empowered to regulate prices. The position offered enormous opportunities for all manner of fraudulent and dishonest practices. Bigot, a Frenchman of France, was a clever man with a long experience of American conditions. His early career was most promising and, when in 1739 he became Commissary at Louisbourg, he effected an astonishing improvement in the affairs of Ile Royale. He remained there till its capture by Pepperrell in 1745; but for a year or two before that time he had turned into crooked ways, tempted to do so, it has been suggested, by the discovery,

almost accidental, that the French authorities would accept without question any excuse for official shortcomings. At all events, as soon as he became Intendant of Canada at the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, he began to fill his pockets. He grew bolder and bolder, till after the appointment of Vaudreuil as Governor in 1755, he made no serious attempt to conceal his operations. This is not the place for a detailed account of his transactions, some of which, though well authenticated, are barely credible. For example, having power to seize food for the king's service in time of war, he bought vast quantities of Canadian grain at a price fixed by himself, shipped it to France in vessels of which he was the real owner, reported to the French Government that Canada was threatened with famine, sold to the king the grain which had just been brought thence, had it taken back thither, and finally sold it again, partly to the Canadian Government and partly to the *habitants* who had grown it. Of course to conduct operations like this Bigot used more than one *alias* and was in league with many lesser officials and men of straw. His most notable confederate was Joseph Cadet, a Canadian, to whom in 1756 he granted a contract for the supply of provisions to all French posts in Canada. Bigot cunningly framed the contract so that Cadet could not make a reasonable profit without dishonesty. While he raised no objection to the contractor's subsequent irregularities, the wretched man was of course at his mercy and dared not deny the Intendant a large share of his gains. The extent of the depredations of Bigot and his friends is perhaps best indicated by the sentences imposed on them in 1763 after the official enquiry into their conduct. The Intendant himself was sentenced to perpetual banishment from France, and was to pay a fine of 1000 livres and to restore 1,500,000. Cadet's punishment was banishment from Paris for nine years, a fine of 300 livres, and the restoration of six millions. Minor offenders were condemned to hand back sums

totalling more than ten million livres. It is evident, on the one hand, that fraud was rampant in the administration of Canada, and on the other that the actual punishment for corruption was not likely to be very severe. That Bigot's doings were not regarded with much horror in France is indicated further by the exculpation of Vaudreuil. Even a commissioner sent from France in 1758 to investigate the finances of Canada had discovered several of Bigot's malpractices; Montcalm himself knew all about them and reported much of his knowledge to the Minister of War; yet after this Vaudreuil could ascribe all the criticism of Bigot to the envy of the unworthy and assert that "nobody is a better citizen than he is, or has the king's interests more at heart." To lie like this is as bad an offence against the State as Bigot's worst peculations; yet the liar escaped scot-free. If public life in Canada was rotten, that of France was little better.

The corruption in the government of Canada affected the prospects of the defence in various ways. Public funds which should have been devoted to military purposes went into the pockets of Bigot and his accomplices. On the other hand, money was expended on worthless fortifications for the benefit of contractors who enjoyed the Intendant's favour. The home government grew tired of sending help to a colony which, instead of profiting by it, was continually asking for more. As for the Canadian peasantry, they were so fleeced and defrauded that they fell into despair. Many farms went out of cultivation. Some of the *habitants* were actually reduced to eating grass. The shortage of food, which was to be so vital a consideration during the summer of 1759, was directly due to the manœuvres of Bigot and his friends. To make things worse, the Intendant himself led an extravagant and dissolute life. His palace at Quebec was the centre of the gaiety of the city. It became especially notorious for high play; but when Montcalm pressed for

an edict against gambling, as unseemly in a time of crisis, Bigot's palace was expressly exempted in the prohibition issued by Vaudreuil. It was suspected that some of the officials welcomed the likelihood of an English conquest of the country, thinking that it would enable them to cover the traces of their misdoings and escape with their plunder. In these circumstances, the peasantry could hardly be expected to feel great enthusiasm for the French cause. The Canadian forces fought reasonably well in action, and they doubtless desired the defeat of the British. There was no tendency to revolt against the king of France. But nothing is to be gained by make-believe in the study of history; and the plain truth is that the resistance of the *habitants* to the British was not marked by that unreflecting intrepidity which is commonly shown by a people which loves its rulers and would suffer to the last extremity in their cause. And who shall blame the Canadians if they felt but a temperate loyalty towards the king who had set Vaudreuil and Bigot to rule over them? Their treatment had been abominable, far worse than that suffered by the American colonies of Britain in the years immediately before their rebellion. Yet it has long been fashionable, even in England, to admire the American rebels; nor does it seem to be considered shocking that they should have accepted the help of France, their inveterate enemy, from whose maw the mother-country had but lately saved them. Nevertheless, writers who praise Adams and Jefferson and Washington seem to think it insulting to suggest that devotion to the French crown did not glow very brightly among the Canadians in 1759, and conceive it to be their duty to write as though the popular resistance to the British outshone that of the Swiss against the Habsburgs, or the Dutch against Philip II, or the Spaniards against Napoleon, or the Confederate States against the North. In point of fact, to anyone who knows the country as it is now and can imagine what it was then, it is astonishing that the

British conquest of Canada was completed with such ease. And, from the French standpoint, the blame lies not with the *habitant*, who had so little to lose, but with his rulers. Bigot and his associates should in fact be numbered among Wolfe's allies.

There was singular unanimity among those in high place as to the weakness of the people's *morale*. Montcalm recognised it. When the British were coming up the river, Vaudreuil thought it necessary to stir up patriotism by proclaiming that they were resolved to slaughter all Canadians without distinction of age or sex. And a little while before, Henri de Pontbriand, Bishop of Quebec, in a pastoral letter denouncing the prevalent immorality and contempt for religion, had spoken in exaggerated terms of the numerical superiority of the British and their initial successes. Throughout their manifestoes both the Governor and the Bishop appeal to fear rather than to loyalty.

Whatever the misgivings and dissensions among the defenders of Canada, there was one ally in which nearly everybody trusted — the river St. Lawrence. Montcalm, indeed, had but a limited confidence in it. At all events, he wanted to mount guns on Cape Tourmente, on the north shore a little below the Ile d'Orléans; but he was overruled. Even to-day, with all modern aids to navigation, one has to be very careful when taking a vessel up to Quebec. In 1759 there were no lights, the charts were mostly bad, the pilots ignorant. No scientific survey of the river had ever been made, an omission which was perhaps deliberate, for it was to the interest of the French government to maintain the awe with which sailors commonly regarded the unknown waters of the St. Lawrence. The river pilots, too, in order to magnify their own importance, habitually exaggerated the dangers of the river. The desired result had been produced; the St. Lawrence had become a nautical bugbear. In 1758, as we have seen, Hardy was plainly terrified of it, and even Boscawen

lies under the suspicion of having shirked the test of navigating it. Vaudreuil's confidence in its reefs, shoals, and currents is not surprising; but as usual he clung to a mistaken belief long after its falsity had been proved.

Though Durell had failed to stop Bougainville, his subsequent doings were marked by skill and judgment. He sailed up the river with seven ships of war and 650 soldiers. On May 23 he was off Bic, the pilot station, and by displaying French colours (an unpleasing but legitimate ruse) he enticed several pilots on board. Four days later he reached Ile aux Coudres, where there is very good anchorage off the northern coast. There he stationed himself to wait for Saunders. The soldiers were landed on the island, where there was good water, sufficient fuel, and abundance of fish. It was an admirable spot from which to establish a blockade of the river.

Ile aux Coudres is some sixty miles below Quebec; but Durell began to prepare for the fleet's passage thither. On hearing of his arrival at Ile aux Coudres the authorities in Quebec took alarm, and it was proposed to sink ships so as to block the Traverse, a very difficult double channel just eastward of the Ile d'Orléans. It was then discovered that no one could say exactly how wide and deep the Traverse was; but a consultation with seamen who knew the place led to the conclusion that it might safely be left to take care of itself. A week later James Cook, master of the *Pembroke*, with several companions, was busily taking soundings of the terrible place, and on June 13 the *Centurion*, fifty guns, moored off the east end of the Ile d'Orléans, records in her log: "At 3 P.M. unmoor'd ship per signal from the *Devonshire*. At 5 weigh'd and came to sail. At 8 got thro' the Traverse. At 9 anchor'd. . . ." Next morning the *Devonshire*, *Pembroke*, and *Squirrel* passed through and anchored between Ile Madame and the Ile d'Orléans. On the latter the French now began to build batteries, with which the British

squadron presently exchanged shots. But the French fire was quite ineffectual.

Meanwhile, on June 4, the main body of the expedition had left Louisbourg for its voyage of little less than a thousand miles. Considering the likelihood of fog, the abundance of perplexing currents, and the prevalence of south-west winds at that time of year, Saunders can hardly have anticipated rapid progress. On the whole he was lucky in the weather. Very elaborate instructions had been given to the captains of the men-of-war and transports with a view to keeping the fleet together and preventing confusion in fog or storm; but while their observance doubtless facilitated progress, conditions were at first so favourable that many of the regulations were superfluous. At noon on June 8 the leading ships made St. Paul Island, at the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence; two days later they passed the Bird Rocks, 55 miles farther on: and here they were joined by the missing company of American Rangers. At sunset on the 13th the *Neptune* was clear of the west point of Anticosti and fairly entering the estuary. For the next day or two, however, the winds were variable and baffling; fog caused some trouble; and it was not till the 16th that the prominent heights known as the Paps of Matane were sighted. On the 18th the greater part of the fleet made the island of Bic; here they anchored, and boats pulling towards the shore were fired on from Rimouski, the first sign of resistance that Saunders and Wolfe had encountered. Off Bic they found awaiting them the *Prince of Orange* with a number of French pilots on board, and the master of the *Princess Amelia*, who had been sent back from Ile aux Coudres by Durell to give Saunders the benefit of the observations he had made between the two places. They were also joined by the frigate *Richmond*, which brought the latest news of Durell's doings. It was now that Wolfe learned of Bougainville's arrival at Quebec.

Early on the 20th the voyage was resumed; but after making Basque Island in nine hours the *Neptune* anchored there for two days. Saunders used the time to give careful directions to the sounding vessels which were to go ahead of the fleet during its further passage; for the serious dangers of the voyage were now to begin. The currents and tides near the confluence of the St. Lawrence and the Saguenay are very strong and complicated. They render dangerous the more northerly of the two channels available for large ships at this point; while if one uses the south channel, one runs great risk from the Couillons Rocks on Green Island — described by Colonel Wood as “one of the most famous navigational dangers in the world.” Nevertheless, on June 21, the fleet, in a long column, sailed up the South Channel without mishap. That night the signal fires of the French could be seen all along the south shore signalling their warning to Quebec.

Once through this perilous pass, the fleet had fairly plain sailing to Ile aux Coudres, which was sighted at dawn on the 23rd. But the narrowing of the channel above Tadoussac had compelled Saunders to string his ships out in a long line. Thus, when the leading vessels reached Ile aux Coudres, the hindmost were off Cacouna, nearly fifty miles away, and it was not until a week later that they were all past the island.

At Bic Wolfe had left the *Neptune* for the *Richmond*. No sooner had he reached Ile aux Coudres than he was eager to go farther, and by the afternoon of the 23rd the *Richmond* had taken him through the Traverse. Next day the transports and men-of-war began the passage of that critical piece of water. The procession continued for several days; and every ship passed through safely. The British had with them a number of French pilots, whom they constrained to work for them through fear of death: but they proved to be of little use. Cook and his



XIII. QUEBEC FROM THE BASIN, ABOUT 1765
From an engraving in the McCord National Museum, McGill University.

comrades had discovered more about the Traverse in a few days than the local pilots had learned in a century and a half. All along the channel there were boats with coloured flags to mark the course; but it was due largely to the sheer skill of the British navigating officers that, in Vaudreuil's words, "the enemy passed sixty ships of war where we had hardly dared to risk a vessel of a hundred tons." There is in Captain Knox's Journal a famous account of what happened on the transport *Goodwill*, the ship in which he had travelled from Louisbourg. Knox's tale is one of those which can hardly be repeated too often. In the afternoon of June 25, he says, a French pilot was put on board of each transport in the foremost division of the fleet. The one allotted to the *Goodwill* was a garrulous and impudent fellow. He assured the men of the *Goodwill* that he hated serving the English, adding that Canada would be the grave of their army, that the walls of Quebec would soon be bedecked with English scalps, and that only a few of their ships would escape to take the dismal news home. It was only out of respect for Saunders' strict commands that the crew forbore to heave him overboard. The task of the pilot was to take the *Goodwill* through the Traverse. Having relieved his mind in the way just described, he gave his directions for the working of the ship. But at this point he was interrupted by the Master, who, in Knox's words, "fixed his Mate at the helm, charged him not to take orders from any person except himself, and, going forward with his trumpet to the fore-castle, gave the necessary instructions. All that could be said by the Commanding-Officer [of the troops], and the other Gentlemen on board, was to no purpose; the Pilot declared we should be lost, for that no French ship ever presumed to pass there without a Pilot; 'aye, aye, my dear (replied our son of Neptune), but, damn me, I'll convince you that an Englishman shall go where a Frenchman dare not show his

nose.' The *Richmond* being close astern of us, the Commanding Officer called out to the Captain, and told him our case; he inquired who the Master was? — and was answered from the fore-castle by the man himself, who told him 'he was old Killick, and that was enough.' I went forward with this experienced mariner, who pointed out the channel to me as we passed, showing me, by the ripple and colour of the water, where there was any danger; and distinguishing the places where there were ledges of rocks (to me invisible) from banks of sand, mud, or gravel. He gave his orders with great unconcern, joked with the sounding-boats who lay off on each side, with different-coloured flags for our guidance; and, when any of them called to him, and pointed to the deepest water, he answered, 'aye, aye, my dear, chalk it down, a damned dangerous navigation — eh, if you don't make a sputter about it, you'll get no credit for it in England,' &c. After we had cleared this remarkable place, where the channel forms a complete zig-zag, the Master called to his Mate to give the helm to somebody else, saying, 'Damn me, if there are not a thousand places in the Thames fifty times more hazardous than this; I am ashamed that Englishmen should make such a rout about it.' The Frenchman asked me if the Captain had not been here before? I assured him in the negative, upon which he viewed him with great attention, lifting, at the same time, his hands and eyes to heaven with astonishment and fervency."

Next day the foremost ships came to anchor off the church of Saint-Laurent, at the most southerly point of the Ile d'Orléans. Wolfe was there in the *Richmond*, and in the evening Saunders arrived in the *Devonshire*, having passed the Traverse in a ship's cutter. The number of the ships, whether men-of-war or transports, was continually being increased, and Wolfe gave orders that the landing of the troops on the island should begin next day. That night, however, two small parties of American Rang-

ers, who had gone ashore, were attacked by Canadians and Indians and forced to seek the protection of the ships' guns. But the inhabitants of the island had nearly all fled, for it had been decided, apparently with Montcalm's concurrence, to make no effort to defend it; and when the disembarkation of the troops began on June 27, it proceeded without challenge.

CHAPTER XII
BEFORE QUEBEC: DISAPPOINTMENT,
JUNE AND JULY, 1759

THE expedition so far had been astonishingly uneventful. But in the latter part of this same day its excitements began. Summer weather on the lower St. Lawrence is variable and violent. Heavy thunderstorms, with high winds and drenching rain, are not infrequent. One of these came on during the afternoon. Several British ships fell foul of one another; nine transports went ashore, and of these two had to be abandoned and were burned by the French, while numerous small boats were destroyed. Of course, in proportion to the naval force present, the total loss was trivial; but Saunders made up his mind to seek a safer and more commodious anchorage.

Meanwhile Wolfe had been to the west point of the island, whence could be seen the whole of the Basin of Quebec, the greater part of the town, and much of the adjacent country. He was familiar with the main topographical features of the view. Straight opposite, a little more than three miles away, stood the city, the Upper Town, with its cathedral, palace, and citadel, outlined against the sky on the lofty promontory, the Lower Town huddled between the cliffs and the shore. Between the city and the heights of Lévis, to the left, the valley of the St. Lawrence narrowed into the distance. To the right of Quebec, from Wolfe's standpoint, was the much smaller valley of the St. Charles, with flat ground stretching from its mouth to the village of Beauport, where there began a line of cliffs, at first insignificant, but rising to a height of nearly 300 feet as they neared the

river Montmorency, the famous falls of which were plainly visible almost due north of Wolfe's position.

There was in all this nothing to astonish Wolfe. Major Mackellar, his chief engineer, had furnished him with a good plan and description of the city, and that he had a very accurate idea of its situation and surroundings is shown by the letter which he wrote to his uncle from Louisbourg. He knew that while the fortifications of Quebec were not of much account, its natural position made it an extremely formidable stronghold. He expected, too, that the greater part of the French forces would be concentrated there. A direct assault on the Lower Town he recognised as useless. His plan had been to land most of his troops between the Montmorency and the St. Charles, force the passage of the latter, and construct his siege-works across the Heights of Abraham, thus severing communication between the city and the rest of Canada. He intended also to establish small entrenched posts on the south shore from Point Lévy to the Chaudière River. These schemes he imparted to his uncle, adding, in a passage of vital moment for the understanding of his subsequent operations, "It is the business of our naval force to be masters of the river, both above and below the town. If I find that the enemy is strong, audacious, and well commanded, I shall proceed with the utmost caution and circumspection, giving Mr. Amherst time to use his superiority. If they are timid, weak, and ignorant, we shall push them with more vivacity, that we may be able before the summer is gone to assist the Commander-in-Chief. I reckon we shall have a smart action at the passage of the river St. Charles, unless we can steal a detachment up the river St. Lawrence, and land them three, four, five miles, or more, above the town, and get time to entrench so strongly that they won't care to attack."

Wolfe had assumed that the enemy would station all his men in the city or close to it. And had there been at Quebec only the

eight or nine thousand men that he expected, the French would have been obliged to do this. Even with 16,000 Montcalm was for a while inclined to content himself with the line of the St. Charles. But in the end he decided to hold the city with no more than 2000 men, consisting mainly of town militia and sailors from the useless ships, whose resistance would be powerfully supported by floating batteries off the Lower Town and stationary ones on the cliffs. Almost all the other troops, including five battalions of French regulars, he placed in well-constructed entrenchments along the shore from the St. Charles to the Montmorency. This disposition of the defending force seems to have had the approval of all the leading French officers. Undoubtedly its advantages were great. But 14,000 men are none too many for a line seven miles long, especially if a majority of them are deficient in military training. Montcalm's arrangements meant that the left wing of the French was a great way from the objective of the British, and that communication between his army and the city depended on a single bridge and one or two fords. A time was to come when these defects contributed heavily to French disaster.

If Wolfe's plans were upset by Montcalm's defensive measures, he had other grounds for surprise which afforded no small compensation. Wolfe had early conceived a high respect and a strong affection for Saunders, and in his will, made on the *Neptune* on June 8, he desired "Admiral Saunders to accept of my light service of Plate, in remembrance of his Guest." He did not, however, expect Saunders to send more than four or five small men-of-war as far up the river as Quebec; the bulk of the fleet, he thought, would remain near Ile aux Coudres to guard against a possible attempt of the French navy to raise the siege. Not only, however, did Saunders come up to Quebec himself, but he brought with him a very powerful squadron. By the end of June there were present at least five ships of the line, with

nine frigates and smaller armed vessels. These numbers were increased in the following month, till at the beginning of August the British naval force taking active part in the siege consisted of eleven ships of the line, six frigates and sloops, two bomb-vessels, and a fire-ship. Such support, it need hardly be said, was invaluable to Wolfe. Before the siege began the half-dozen French warships at Quebec were sent far up the river, and in face of Saunders's force there was no thought of bringing them back to the town. Wolfe could therefore move his troops about the Basin with little fear of molestation by water. He could deal effectually with the French floating batteries. The artillery support which he could provide for landing parties was unexpectedly formidable. Saunders readily lent men to help in digging redoubts and trenches, and some of the ships' biggest guns were landed and served by their own crews. The help rendered by Saunders in excess of Wolfe's expectations must have well-nigh doubled the effectiveness of his army.

A military force conducting operations in the heart of the enemy's country should have a consistent policy towards the civil population. Wishing to make his attitude clear at the outset of his dealings with the Canadians, Wolfe on June 27 issued a proclamation, probably drafted by Barré, which he caused to be affixed to the door of the church of Saint-Laurent. It announced that the king of Great Britain, justly angered by French attacks on British colonies, had sent a great force to conquer the most notable of the French possessions in America. Towards peasants and labourers, women and children, and the clergy, the British king had no animosity; they were free to return to their homes, where Wolfe guaranteed them freedom from molestation, the enjoyment of their property, and the practice of their religion, provided that they took no part, direct or indirect, in warlike operations. But if they rashly had recourse to arms, they must endure all the rigours of war, and what might befall

them at the hands of an exasperated soldiery they might imagine for themselves. There was no chance of their receiving help from France.

The atrocities perpetrated by the French on British subjects in America would have justified the most severe reprisals. But taught by a humane religion, Englishmen rejected methods of barbarism. The Canadians would have only themselves to blame if they saw those whom they loved perishing next winter.

As for Wolfe, he would follow the laws of war with a clear conscience. The choice lay with the Canadians. On the one hand, England proffered protection and help; on the other, France deserted them at the moment of danger, and while it was true that she had sent them a certain number of soldiers, had they not been rather a burden than a succour? On the decision of the Canadians, Wolfe repeated, their fate would depend.

Such was the gist of a commonplace, though rather pompous, manifesto, over which a great deal of ink has been wasted. French writers have introduced it into their works with melodramatic gestures; English historians have deprecatingly striven to show that it does not prove Wolfe to have been a Hun. The truth is that in time of war proclamations of this kind are common form; our own time has produced hundreds of them. This proclamation of Wolfe's was partly propaganda — very crude, it is true — and partly warning, which it would have been inhuman not to give. He told the Canadians that if they wished to be treated as civilians, they must behave as such. If, while pretending to be civilians, they acted as belligerents, he would be justified by all the laws of war in taking the most drastic measures against their persons and property. The document produced no effect, and Wolfe was of course perfectly well aware that the majority of the Canadians would never hear of it. But it was a decent formality to announce his intentions and to give the people, grossly deceived by their leaders as to the character

of the British, a chance of saving their property. As for our opinion of him, the proclamation should not affect it.

On June 28 the landing of the troops was continued and virtually completed. Hitherto the attitude of the French towards the expedition had been one of almost complete passivity. On the evening of this day, however, they planned a stroke from which great results were expected. Eight vessels had been bought — at vast profit, by the way, to Bigot and his gang — and fitted out as fire-ships. The scheme was that as soon as darkness fell seven of these should drop down the river on the ebb-tide. A boastful fellow, Captain Delouche, was appointed to command the leading ship. His instructions were that on approaching the British he should set his vessel alight and fire two guns. Thereupon the other commanders should ignite their vessels, and all the men engaged in the enterprise should forthwith take to the boats. Delouche lost his head, and fired his ship and his signals when he was hardly round Point Lévy. Five of his fellows imitated him; the sixth vainly tried to get within striking distance, was hemmed in by the blazing vessels, and perished heroically at his post. The attack, though mishandled, looked and sounded most alarming, for the fire-ships were crammed with combustibles, explosives, and projectiles. The British pickets towards the west end of the Ile d'Orléans fled in panic. But the navy was not so easily disconcerted. It seemed advisable, indeed, for four of the ships of war to sail farther off; but a swarm of ships' boats pulled up stream, grappled the fire-ships, and towed ashore those which had not yet run aground of themselves. The failure of the undertaking caused great chagrin in Quebec; and, at the instance of the citizens, Vaudreuil held an enquiry into the conduct of Delouche and his fellow-officers, but as everyone accused everyone else, it was found impossible to fix the responsibility of any individual.

The British troops were now ashore; but Wolfe's intentions

had been thwarted by Montcalm's dispositions. On the other hand, the French had failed miserably with their fire-ships, on which many of them had counted for decisive victory. Both sides had therefore to accept the prospect of a lengthy siege. For the next month neither actually attempted any ambitious operation. Montcalm was resolved to hold his position firmly and risk nothing, no matter what the temptation to do otherwise. As for Wolfe, he never appeared to less advantage than during the first part of the siege of Quebec. The resolution which he had shown at Louisbourg seemed to have deserted him. His deficiencies were doubtless due in part to bad health. That he was feeling very unwell we know from occasional hints in his usually reticent journal. Still, he was well enough to display much physical vigour, and it is idle to deny that he was gravely perplexed by the difficult problem that Montcalm had set him. He had told his uncle that if the enemy proved very formidable—a condition which had certainly been fulfilled—he would act “with the utmost caution and circumspection, giving Mr. Amherst time to use his superiority.” It is natural for the modern historian to forget all about Mr. Amherst; but to Wolfe he was a most important factor in the situation. If the French had 16,000 men at Quebec, it followed that they could have very few on Lake Champlain; and Wolfe had every right to expect that a speedy advance by Amherst on Montreal would force Vaudreuil to despatch troops to resist him. In that event the defenders of Quebec would certainly be compelled to shorten their lines, and Wolfe might then have a chance of putting his original plan into execution. Notwithstanding these considerations, Wolfe never ceased to seek a solution of his own for the difficulties that faced him, though for some weeks he showed an unwonted lack of self-confidence.

For a few days, it is true, the British seemed to be making good progress. The storm and the fire-ships made Saunders

anxious to move his squadron to the more spacious anchorage of the Basin. On June 29 therefore a British detachment was sent to camp at the west point of the Ile d'Orléans, whence Quebec and the adjacent waters were under observation. Before the ships went up, however, it was necessary to ascertain whether Point Lévy was strongly held; so that evening Monckton's brigade was ferried across the river to the neighbourhood of Beaumont, where it camped for the night. Next day, while carrying out a reconnaissance, it was attacked by a strong body of Canadians and Indians. These had the better of the affray, but unfortunately for themselves they took a prisoner who informed Vaudreuil that Monckton's movements were merely intended to distract the attention of the French from the lines of Beauport, where Wolfe intended to make a big attack that night. On learning of Monckton's presence on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, Montcalm had ridden into Quebec to urge Vaudreuil to have Point Lévy occupied in force; but, when he heard the prisoner's news, he agreed that all available troops should be concentrated at the threatened point. The French remained on the alert all night, but nothing happened; and next day Vaudreuil ordered 1200 men to cross to Point Lévy. The prisoner, however, when questioned again, persisted in declaring that the attack on Beauport was fully planned and would certainly be made. Vaudreuil consequently kept the 1200 on the north bank. On the following day, July 2, Montcalm sent to the Governor a memorandum in which he argued at length the necessity of holding Point Lévy, but presumably there was in the document something which irritated Vaudreuil, for he disregarded it. Before anything more could be done, Wolfe had occupied Point Lévy with 5000 men and a strong force of artillery. He established a fortified camp to secure his position, and prepared to erect batteries just above Pointe aux Pères, within easy range of Quebec.

Vaudreuil has been much blamed for his failure to occupy Point Lévy. It is urged that unless Wolfe had got possession of the high ground on the south shore opposite the city, he could have inflicted no damage whatever on the Upper Town, while the Lower Town would have been exposed to nothing worse than long-range fire from the ships. It is possible, however, that in this case Vaudreuil was right, though why he changed his mind remains a mystery. At any rate, if Point Lévy was to be held at all, it should have been fortified before the British arrived. Had Vaudreuil sent his 1200 men thither on July 1, they would certainly have been resisted, probably with success, by Wolfe. And in any case it is doubtful whether the French could have held the south shore without giving up their position between the St. Charles and the Montmorency. Thanks to the ships, Wolfe could at any time have flung his whole force at Point Lévy, and the French could not have beaten him off unless the position had been held by so large a part of their army that insufficient men would have been left to hold the lines of Beauport. Of course there is here a further reason why Montcalm should have been satisfied with the line of the St. Charles. But those who approve of his fortification of the north shore should not blame Vaudreuil for failing to secure the south.

The heights opposite Quebec were now lost to the French. On July 5 several batteries were begun at Pointe aux Pères. The workmen were exposed to the fire of the town guns and the French floating batteries, and on the first day sixteen were killed. But Saunders' frigates kept down the French bombardment, and his loan of a battalion of marines enabled Wolfe to employ more soldiers at the task of digging. As the work went on, casualties became very few. Colonel Williamson turned his expert knowledge to full account, and when, on July 12, a heavy bombardment was opened on the town, it proved terribly effective. The Lower Town suffered most, but no part of the city was

safe, for the British landed some naval 13-inch mortars, which could throw shells nearly three miles. Even the bridge over the St. Charles was not quite beyond their range, though they never actually hit it. Had the French, while abandoning the Beauport shore, held the heights across the St. Lawrence, the town would certainly have suffered less from the British artillery.

The occupation of Point Lévy and Pointe aux Pères was of advantage to Wolfe inasmuch as it enabled him to inflict some material damage on the enemy and also gave him partial command of the river in its course past the town. But though it might destroy buildings and slay civilians, the bombardment did not greatly further his main purpose. He must get possession of Quebec, and in order to do that he must outmanœuvre or defeat the French army. His plan was already made.

On July 3, after a consultation with Saunders, Wolfe had resolved, with the admiral's concurrence, "to get ashore if possible above the town." The attempt was to be preceded by a bombardment from Pointe aux Pères, and it was decided to confuse the enemy by landing Townshend's brigade at the east side of the Montmorency estuary, as though for an attack on the Beauport lines. On July 5, after the north shore above Quebec had been reconnoitred under his direction, Murray reported that a landing was practicable at Pointe Saint-Michel, close to Sil-lery. Four days later Wolfe crossed by night from the camp at the west end of the Ile d'Orléans and landed with ten companies of grenadiers just eastward of the mouth of the Montmorency, being followed at once by Townshend and his brigade. Next day he was joined by Murray with two battalions. He entrenched a camp on the rising ground close to the falls; and for eight weeks this was the principal position of the besiegers, Wolfe, who lodged in a farm-house, making it his headquarters. He had

there five battalions, a strong detachment of grenadiers and Light Infantry, and a powerful force of artillery.¹

We have Wolfe's own word for it that the landing at Montmorency was only a feint. As such it was extremely successful, for it imposed not only upon the French and most of the British, but, until Wolfe's journal came to light less than twenty years ago, upon all modern historians as well. And indeed it was not long before what had been begun as a pretence became serious. For the projected attack above the town was abandoned. The batteries opposite Quebec, which had to be completed before anything could be done, opened fire, as we have seen, on July 12. Wolfe's journal and orders show that on the following days he was completing his preparations for the enterprise. On the night of the 16th, according to his plan, a squadron of men-of-war was to have tried to get past the town. Wind and weather seemed favourable to Wolfe, but the attempt was not made, the captain in charge of the undertaking considering the wind too light. Two nights later, however, the *Sutherland* (50 guns), the *Squirrel* (20 guns), two armed sloops, and two armed transports, with a detachment of soldiers on board, sailed between Cape Diamond and Pointe aux Pères and got above Quebec. They were heavily fired upon and sustained some damage; while the *Diana* (32 guns), which was to have accompanied them, was fouled by another vessel and went ashore. It took more than twenty-four hours' work under hot fire to get her off, and she had to be sent to Boston for repairs.

On July 19 Wolfe, in the words of his journal, "reconnoitred the country immediately above Quebeck and found that if we had ventured the Stroke that was first intended we should probably

¹ The Light Infantry consisted of ten companies, each of the line regiments in Wolfe's army contributing one. They were commonly employed as a separate corps, but the men were still officially reckoned as belonging to their several regiments.

have succeeded." Evidently there had already been a change of plan. Now, it appears, there was an idea that it might be possible to land some distance higher up, for on the 20th Wolfe "reconnoitred Sillery, La Chaudière, and Cap Rouge," and "ordered a detachment up the river for intelligence." The exploits of this body will be noticed later. Its report seems to have persuaded Wolfe that his project must be dropped for the present. On the 23rd, he records, the "Admirals and Generals advise for the publick Service. Resolution to attack the French Army. Debate about the method." The upshot of this council of war was that the feint at the Montmorency became the main British offensive.

What had gone wrong there is no means of telling. Wolfe's invaluable journal reveals that in the fortnight during which the attack was being prepared, his relations with Saunders were not as good as usual. He considered that the fleet might have done more to protect the troops on the Ile d'Orléans and at Point Lévy from the enemy's floating batteries and armed boats. On the 12th he records that Saunders was displeased with him "for speaking harshly upon the subject of the irregularities committed by the Seamen." A day or two later there is a hint that some of the sailors had shown cowardice and a complaint that communication between the Montmorency camp and the Ile d'Orléans is not secure. He was evidently much annoyed at the failure of the ships to sail past the town on the 16th. From another source we gather that the feeling of his staff towards the fleet was very bitter. At the same time there was dissension in the army, and Wolfe's relations with Townshend and Murray became very bad. There was, too, some extremely wet weather, which delayed the completion of the batteries opposite the town. Many things, in fact, may have contributed to the frustration of "the Stroke that was first intended." But all explanations are merely conjectural.

The nature of Wolfe's plan is less obscure. The attack was to be made quite near Quebec, its object being to seize the heights immediately to the west of the city. In a note to Monckton, Wolfe mentions a "woody gully" on the enemy's right. This can be none other than the Anse au Foulon, and Wolfe hoped that the Highlanders might climb up it, so as to turn the French flank. So far as we know, the French had no troops on the heights save a few Canadian militiamen and Indians, but unless a surprise had been effected they might well have held the attackers at bay until reinforcements arrived from beyond the St. Charles. Besides the Highlanders, the 15th regiment and the Light Infantry were to take part in the operation and to be ferried across the river from Point Lévy in flat-bottomed boats. To what extent Wolfe meant to use the rest of the army there is no means of judging. It will be seen, of course, that there are many points of resemblance between this plan and the one which ultimately led to victory. But the differences are still more important; and the abandoned project had but a slender chance of success.

The whole of this episode is beset with mysteries. It seems certain, for instance, that Wolfe did not personally examine the shore above Quebec until July 19. He implied in his dispatch to Pitt that he could not do so until British ships had got past the town. This was nonsense; Murray's men had been opposite Silvery a fortnight earlier. Wolfe also gave Pitt his reasons for totally rejecting the idea of a landing beyond Quebec. The enemy, he had found, were on the alert, while the British were faced with great difficulties, "arising from the nature of the ground, and the obstacles to our communication with the fleet. But what I feared most was, that, if we should land between the town and the river Cape Rouge, the body first landed could not be reinforced, before they were attacked by the enemy's whole army. Notwithstanding these difficulties, I thought once of at-



XIV. TWO CARICATURES OF WOLFE BY GENERAL TOWNSHEND

Drawn before Quebec in 1759. From the original pen and ink (wash-tinted) drawings in the McCord National Museum, McGill University.

tempting it at St. Michael's, about three miles above the town: but, perceiving that the enemy were jealous of the design, were preparing against it, and had actually brought artillery and a mortar, which, being so near Quebec, they could increase as they pleased, to play upon the shipping; and as it must have been many hours before we could attack them, even supposing a favourable night for the boats to pass the town unhurt, it seemed so hazardous that I thought it best to desist." Why should Wolfe have wished to convey the impression, as he did, that until the ships had passed the city he never thought seriously of landing higher up? And why should he justify the abandonment of the notion by reasons which told with equal force against the "stroke" which, according to the opinion expressed in his journal, would "probably have succeeded"? On this matter, Wolfe's report, it cannot be denied, was disingenuous and misleading. His motive is not easily discerned. In the same dispatch he shows himself very ready to accept the blame for mishaps which had occurred; nor can one see how the disclosure of his frustrated intentions would have injured his reputation. It may perhaps be suggested that the explanation is to be sought in his desire to preserve amicable relations with Saunders. It is not unlikely that the admiral had withdrawn his consent to the project or in some other way had failed Wolfe. We know that he was allowed to see the dispatch before it was sent, and that in deference to his protests Wolfe omitted some portions of it. In his official reports Wolfe was usually very sparing of blame, however critical he might be in private conversation; and if Saunders had really been responsible for the abandonment of his cherished plan, he probably thought it best to avoid all reference to its existence.

Though the landing at the Montmorency might have been intended as a feint, it appears that Wolfe from the first hoped that some substantial advantage might come of it. He expected to

render part of Montcalm's trenches untenable by an enfilading fire; he thought that it might be possible to cross the Montmorency river unexpectedly by fords higher up and attack the French position from the rear; and he intended by exposing himself to enemy assaults to tempt the French into a general action, in the issue of which he had complete confidence. But these ideas bore little fruit. The French soon protected their trenches adequately against the flanking fire of his guns. The Montmorency fords were firmly and vigilantly held, as the British found when they reconnoitred them. The skirmishing which took place in the woods showed that in such surroundings the Canadians and Indians would probably hold up any British advance. Finally, the French would not make a general attack. Vaudreuil and Bigot wished to do so. But Montcalm, supported by all his principal officers, refused his consent. "Drive them thence," he said of the British on the Montmorency, "and they will give us more trouble; while they are there they cannot hurt us, let them amuse themselves." And in this instance Vaudreuil deferred to his judgment.

The only offensive operation that Montcalm would countenance was a night-attack on the British position near Point Lévy. The project seems to have been initiated by some of the citizens of Quebec. Montcalm concurred in the appointment as leader of Captain Dumas, of the Languedoc regiment, who was allowed to take 150 regulars. The rest of his force was most heterogeneous. There were a body of militia, a number of civilians, and a party of students from the seminary, the total strength being about 1500. On the evening of July 12 these crossed the St. Lawrence near Cap Rouge and set out eastward along the south shore in two columns. After marching for a mile the first column was frightened by a noise in a wood, and ran away. The second column took the fugitives for charging British, and opened fire. A lively fight followed, with casualties in killed

and wounded. Eventually both sides regained their boats, and made the best of their way back to Quebec.

When the *Sutherland* and her consorts passed the town, the French were naturally much perturbed. Their water communications with Montreal were now in continuous jeopardy, and it was feared that the British meant to land and cut the Montreal road. Nine hundred men were sent under Dumas to watch all the landing-places between Quebec and Cap Rouge, especially the Anse au Foulon. The French also took cannon along the cliffs and fired at the ships, forcing them more than once to move out of range. But Montcalm maintained that the British had no intention of landing a large force above the city, and that a detachment of Canadians and Indians, stiffened by 300 regulars, would suffice to frustrate any minor enterprise they might attempt. On July 21, however, the British successfully raided Pointe aux Trembles: they seized some cattle and stores, and took a few score prisoners, mostly women, some of whom had gone thither to escape the bombardment of Quebec. Next day the Quebec ladies were restored to the city. They spoke highly of the courteous treatment they had received. Some of them had dined with Wolfe, who had jested about the caution of the French generals, marvelling that they had rejected the opportunities for battle which he had offered. Though this success gave some satisfaction to the British, it was but a small matter. Indeed, it rather confirmed the views of Montcalm, for the end of the raid had been accelerated by the arrival of Dumas, whose presence would have rendered very risky any attempt of the British to establish themselves on shore.

The movements of the British during the first month of the siege have been criticised from many quarters and on many grounds. Wolfe has been widely condemned for violating an elementary principle of strategy by dividing his army. It is true that by July 20 it was in four detachments—one at the

Montmorency camp, one on the Ile d'Orléans, one near Point Lévy, and one on the ships up the river. As a rule, no doubt, it is inadvisable for a general to split up his forces after this fashion; but Wolfe thought that in this case the risk might be taken, and the event proved that he was right. Apart from the abortive enterprise of Captain Dumas, there was no serious attempt to destroy any of the divisions of his army. Furthermore, the various detachments of the British force were not separated, in the sense that they were out of touch with one another. Wolfe's critics in this relation have commonly forgotten the fleet. From the Etchemin to the Montmorency, Wolfe had a continuous line, held partly by the army, partly by the navy. If one sector was threatened, help could speedily be sent from others. In fact, from the Montmorency Wolfe's men could be moved to Pointe aux Pères more quickly than Montcalm's to Cape Diamond. Again, suppose that the French resolved to annihilate one of the divisions of the British force, how were they to get at it? As we have seen, they could not approach Point Lévy save by a long and circuitous march, the dangers and difficulties of which were greatly increased once the British ships got past the city. The camp on the Ile d'Orléans was practically immune; at any rate, the British would have had ample warning of any projected attack. The ships could be shot at, but not otherwise molested. The camp on the Montmorency might of course be assailed. Wolfe hoped that it would be. It was strongly fortified; it could be approached only on a narrow front; and reinforcements from the Ile d'Orléans or Point Lévy could soon reach its defenders. In short, Wolfe's rashness in dividing his army was only apparent; and while a smaller man would no doubt have obeyed the text-book, Wolfe's disregard of it in this instance betokens skill rather than incompetence.

At the end of the first month of the siege, neither side seemed to have achieved much. In the circumstances, such a result was

satisfactory to the French. Nevertheless their position was not altogether enviable. The presence of British ships above Quebec, though nothing much had come of it, was a source of continual apprehension. Great disappointment was occasioned, too, by the failure of a second attempt to destroy Saunders' main force. This was made by seventy-two fire-rafts on July 27, and though carried out with much resolution was foiled by the profane intrepidity of the British sailors, who "took Hell in tow," as they put it, and pulled the blazing rafts ashore. The morale of the civil population was becoming impaired by the bombardment, and by the shortage of food. "I herewith send you fourteen biscuits," wrote one of the citizens to a friend in the country, "all that I can spare, and in our present distressful and deplorable situation they are no mere compliment." Montcalm was disturbed by a threatened lack of powder, occasioned, it seems, by some of Bigot's defalcations. His feud with Vaudreuil was as bitter as ever. His strategy, too, caused dissension. The inhabitants of Quebec could not understand why they were exposed to loss of life and property while most of his regulars remained safe in their trenches around Beauport. The Canadian militia were thinking of the harvest; many knew, moreover, that their farms were being destroyed and their beasts carried off by the invaders. Would not a more active policy curtail the sufferings of the country?

On the British side the spirits of the troops remained good. They were on short rations, but provisions had come up, and another big convoy was on the way. The country near Quebec was yielding a good deal of food, especially live-stock. Wolfe had waited for some time to see whether the Canadians would take any notice of his proclamation of June 27. Though none had done so by July 5, the General Orders issued on that day contain the following passage: "No church, houses or buildings of any kind, are to be destroyed without orders. The persons that

remain in their habitations, their women and children, are to be treated with humanity. If any violence be offered to a woman, the offender shall be punished with death."

Wolfe and Vaudreuil had already exchanged communications, in which the former, declaring that the British wished to conduct the war with all possible leniency, expressed the hope that there would be no scalping, adding that, if there were any, the British would revenge it. As a proof of his desire for moderation, he released twenty-five ladies captured by ships lower down the St. Lawrence, a gracious act of courtesy received rather churlishly by Vaudreuil. Later in the month, however, after the raid on Pointe aux Trembles, there was an exchange of courtesies, Wolfe sending some cases of spirits to Vaudreuil, who responded with cases of wine. But immediately afterwards the tone of their communications altered. Each side accused the other of using intervals of truce in order to improve its military position. It happened, too, that three British grenadiers had been captured by the Indians, and Wolfe had heard that they were to be burned alive. In a brusque note (probably composed by Barré), Vaudreuil was told that if such an atrocity were perpetrated, the most severe reprisals would follow, and no distinction would be made between French, Canadians, and Indians. The Governor answered that the grenadiers, like all others in like case, had been ransomed from their captors at the expense of the King of France, and would be treated as prisoners of war. Wolfe, however, was not satisfied, and British ranging and scouting parties were instructed "to burn and lay waste for the future, sparing only churches or houses dedicated to divine worship,"² though the injunction against the molestation of women and children was repeated, and there was to be no scalp-

² The records of a number of parishes near Quebec allege that their churches were "ruined" during the siege. Architectural evidence shows, however, that, while many windows were broken, the fabric and fittings rarely suffered serious damage.

ing except of Indians or Canadians dressed like Indians. Meanwhile, Canadian civilians—mostly boys and old men—were continually firing on the British, in complete disregard of Wolfe's manifesto. On July 25 he consequently published a new proclamation. As the Canadians had shown themselves unworthy of his leniency, he had ordered his officers to seize the *habitants* and their live-stock and to destroy private property at their discretion. Since he would be sorry to go to the barbarous extremities of which the Canadians and Indians had given examples, he would defer till August 10 the selection of the prisoners against whom he would retaliate, hoping that in the interval the Canadians would conform to the terms of his first proclamation and so move his clemency. Prisoners and live-stock were now seized in large numbers. The former were placed on two transports; for a time those incapable of bearing arms were sent to Quebec, but when the French insinuated that this was done to increase the difficulty of feeding the population, Wolfe, with a magnanimous gesture, said that he would keep and feed them all. Notwithstanding the harshness of his measures, he continued to complain of cruelties practised by Indians and Canadians. One gets the impression that he was making the most of reported atrocities, probably with the object of justifying the fullest use of all reprisals warranted by the rules of war.

The strain on Wolfe's nerves, inevitably great and rendered particularly hard to bear by his ill-health, was unfortunately increased at this time by the growing antipathy between him and Townshend. Their quarrel, like that of Montcalm and Vaudreuil, has been continued into our own time. In this case, the last word lay with the more able man, and the dispute did no serious harm to the British cause, for Townshend was too clever and too good a soldier to go so far as military insubordination. The disagreement is rather mysterious. By some in close touch with Wolfe, it was believed that the real cause of disharmony

was Murray, who cunningly played upon the vain and capricious Townshend. But this view lacks confirmation by contemporary witnesses, and does not accord well with what we otherwise know of the characters of the men concerned. On the whole, it is likely that sheer personal antipathy lay at the root of the quarrel. Perhaps, too, Wolfe suspected that Townshend had joined the expedition for the purpose of annoying and discrediting him. But what little we know of the disagreement comes mainly from the side of Townshend. Wolfe never alludes to it in his letters or dispatches; and in his journal there is only one entry that seems to refer to it. Townshend, we gather, complained that Wolfe rarely consulted his brigadiers and not seldom concealed his intentions from them until the latest possible moment; and once, Wolfe himself hints, he threatened his commander with a parliamentary enquiry into his conduct. The account in Townshend's journal of the establishment of the camp on the Montmorency is designed to show Wolfe as incompetent, reckless, and arrogant; it certainly exhibits the author as captious, pedantic, and officious. But it was probably in his informal relations with Wolfe that Townshend made himself especially offensive. Wolfe was a poor man, of undistinguished birth; each of his brigadiers was the son of a nobleman. He was younger than all of them. He had therefore no adventitious claims to their respect, but must rely solely upon his rank and personality. Now at mess or on informal occasions, only a weak or foolish man will stand upon his rank; and from what we know of Wolfe, no one would be less disposed to carry official distinctions into private intercourse. Townshend, it seems, knew how to presume upon this to the verge of military impropriety. He was full of that peculiarly mean form of spite which delights in slandering a man under the cloak of a jest. There are in the McCord National Museum at McGill University several caricatures of Wolfe which Townshend drew during the siege. That

the humour of them all is uncommonly broad merely reflects the fashion of the day and in itself has no personal significance. What matters is that in none of them does Wolfe appear as a pleasant person; he is represented as ugly, silly, brutal, and obscene. Now anyone who was not well acquainted with both artist and victim would infer from the pictures that Wolfe really possessed these characteristics in a marked degree. There lies the offence. Yet when the cartoons were circulated at mess, ostensibly as a jest, it was hard for Wolfe to take any action, and a show of annoyance was precisely what Townshend wished to provoke. One night, however, a specially objectionable drawing was passed round the dinner-table, and when it reached Wolfe he crumpled it up and threw it down with the words, "If we live, this shall be enquired into; but we must first beat the enemy." An open and irreparable breach would imperil the success of the siege; everything must be endured to avoid it. So thought Wolfe, and Townshend knew that he thought it, and played upon his commander's sense of duty. Would he himself have grieved much had the siege failed?

It may be said on Townshend's behalf that he perhaps did not fully realise what offence he was giving. An habitually satirical man seldom does. And over against his hideous caricatures there stands to his credit the most pleasing of all existing portraits of Wolfe. It must be recognised too that Wolfe's behaviour during the siege was often annoying and bewildering. He was not at his best, and seemed to be more unreasonable than he really was. "Within the space of five hours," wrote an officer in his journal on July 20, "we received at the General's request three different orders of consequence, which were contradicted immediately after their reception; which indeed has been the constant practice of the General ever since we have been here, to the no small amazement of every one who has the liberty of thinking. Every step he takes is wholly his own; I'm

told he asks no one's opinion, and wants no advice; and therefore as he conducts without an assistant, the honour or . . . will be in proportion to his success." Such conduct is naturally attributed to irresolution or self-importance. Yet Wolfe probably had good reason for it. British soldiers were often captured, and sometimes they deserted. When questioned by the French, the men seem generally to have been ready to talk. Not infrequently information given in apparent good faith proved to be false, as in the case of the expected attack on Beauport which prevented the French from occupying Point Lévy. It seems certain that to puzzle the French Wolfe issued numerous orders which he never meant to be executed, and that when he heard that a man had deserted or been taken prisoner, he commonly cancelled the last genuine order given. His reticence towards the brigadiers was perhaps carried rather too far; but it is very difficult to guard against the spread of information — on July 20, for instance, the very date of the criticism just quoted, a servant of Townshend's went over to the enemy. At all events, Wolfe's policy perplexed the French, and he would have been pleased to see in Montcalm's journal the note, "*déserteurs, verbiage, aucune lumière.*"

CHAPTER XIII

BEFORE QUEBEC: DEFEAT AND DEJECTION, JULY AND AUGUST, 1759

JULY drew towards an end, and the besiegers had neither done nor attempted anything decisive. Of the advance of Amherst there was no sign; the French army at Quebec was as strong as ever. Wolfe realised that nearly half his available time had been spent. If the next six or seven weeks were to be no more eventful than those which had passed since he reached Quebec, he would be defeated, nay ruined. Reason and impulse alike urged him to strike a hard blow. The council of war on July 23 decided where it should fall.

Wolfe had reverted to his original plan, communicated to his uncle from Louisbourg. He would try to force the line of the St. Charles. Montcalm always expected and dreaded such an attempt. But what he feared most was an attack on his right, near the mouth of the St. Charles, whereas Wolfe decided to strike at his extreme left, near the Montmorency. He has given his reasons for the choice. The artillery in the Montmorency camp could be used in support of the attack; the majority, even the whole, of the British force might act at once; and, in case of a repulse, there was a fairly secure line of retreat: "neither one or other of these advantages," he urges, "can anywhere else be found." They do not amount to very much, especially when compared with the defects of the scheme, which with admirable candour Wolfe himself detailed at length in a dispatch to Pitt. One gets the impression that he was trusting overmuch to luck and the high quality of his rank and file.

His tactical dispositions, too, were crude. There was no ef-

fort to conceal his intentions. At ten in the morning of July 31 part of Monckton's brigade embarked at Point Lévy and, after being rowed half way across to the Montmorency, were joined by troops from the Ile d'Orléans; the united force consisted of the 15th Foot, the Highlanders, 200 Royal Americans, and thirteen companies of grenadiers. Their first objective was to be a redoubt just above high-water mark and about a mile from the mouth of the river. As the depth of the water off this point did not allow men-of-war to approach within range of the French lines, a couple of armed transports ran in and grounded at high water within two musket-shots of the enemy batteries. The *Centurion*, Anson's old flagship, stationed herself off the river mouth and vigorously bombarded the nearest French positions, while the *Pembroke*, *Trent*, *Lowestoft*, *Richmond*, and *Racehorse* covered the waiting boats and exchanged a lively fire with the shore batteries until the ebbing tide compelled them to withdraw. Meanwhile the British guns at the Montmorency Camp and Pointe aux Pères did what harm they could to the French within their range.

For several hours the troops in the boats waited under a scorching sun. The reason for the delay was that the brigades of Townshend and Murray, which were to constitute the major part of the attacking force, had to cross the Montmorency river by a ford below the falls which was only passable when the tide was low. The truth is that the various factors in Wolfe's scheme could not be satisfactorily co-ordinated. Long before the assault was launched, it was of course obvious to the French where it was coming. Montcalm sent reinforcements of regular troops to the Chevalier de Lévis, who was in command at the threatened point. The French artillery kept up a very hot fire, which did much harm to the stranded transports and compelled the withdrawal of the soldiers who had at first remained on board.

Wolfe had supposed that the redoubt to be attacked was out

of musket-shot of the French trenches. He hoped, therefore, that if it were taken, the French would come into the open to recover it and that a general engagement would thus be occasioned. Even should they refuse to be drawn, the redoubt would furnish a good jumping-off ground for the next stage of the offensive. But from the more advanced transport it could be seen that the redoubt was well commanded by the French works. Still, since it looked to Wolfe as though the enemy were in confusion — a wholly false impression — and since everything was ready for the attack, he resolved to proceed according to plan. At half-past one Monckton's men were rowed slowly towards the shore, and soon afterwards Townshend and Murray marched their troops down to the ford, where they were drawn up ready to cross as soon as the tide permitted. About three o'clock the boats were ordered to land their men. As they neared the shore, many of them grounded on a concealed ledge. This mishap caused great confusion: the French increased their fire: some of the boats which remained afloat had to sheer off: and Wolfe had to send word to stop Townshend. When at length order was restored, Wolfe with some officers examined the shore in a flat-bottomed boat, and found what seemed a suitable landing-place. The whole operation was again set in motion, though it was now nearly half-past five and there was little more than two hours' daylight left. The leading boats reached the shore without disaster, and landed the grenadiers and the Royal Americans. The grenadiers had been ordered to form into four sections, and to await the landing of the 15th and the Highlanders and the approach of Townshend's brigade. But no sooner were they on land than they rushed tumultuously forward and strove to scale the grassy heights surmounted by the enemy's trenches. Men fell fast in the hail of grape-shot and musket-balls that poured upon them, and recoiling in disorder they sought shelter in the redoubt on the shore, which the French had abandoned on their

approach. But this proved to be no protection, and the difficulty of rallying them was increased by a heavy thunderstorm which had just broken. Meanwhile, it is true, the remainder of Monckton's men had been drawn up on the beach, and the troops from the Montmorency were advancing along the shore in good order. Time, however, had been wasted and heavy loss sustained; the storm — which some welcomed and others execrated — hastened the decline of daylight; and the rising tide menaced the retreat of Townshend and Murray. Wolfe therefore ordered a general withdrawal. Townshend and Murray were to return to camp, followed by the Highlanders; the 15th were to re-embark for Point Lévy, the grenadiers and Royal Americans for the Ile d'Orléans. Though under heavy fire, these movements were conducted with admirable discipline and expedition, the men from the Montmorency camp waving their hats at the French as they marched away and challenging them to a fair fight in the open. The two stranded transports were burned by the British.

Men who dined with Wolfe that night said that he seemed stunned by the blow. Thenceforward, until the last few hours of his life, he believed himself ruined. Against the offending grenadiers his wrath was bitter. In his next orders occurred the following passage. "The check which the Grenadiers met with yesterday, will, it is hoped, be a lesson to them for the time to come; such *impetuous, irregular, and unsoldierlike* proceedings destroy all order, make it impossible for their commanders to form any disposition for an attack, and put it out of the General's power to execute his plan.

"The Grenadiers could not suppose that they alone could beat the French army, and therefore it was necessary that the corps under Brigadier Monckton and Brigadier Townshend should have time to join, that the attack might be general; the very first fire of the enemy was sufficient to repulse men who had lost all sense of order and military discipline. . . .

“The loss, however, is inconsiderable and may be easily repaired, when a favourable opportunity offers, if the men will show a proper attention to their officers.”

It was widely thought in the army that this censure was too severe. And indeed it is doubtful whether the misconduct of the grenadiers had much effect upon the issue. Had more men come into action, it is likely that the British losses, 30 officers and 420 men killed and wounded, would have been still greater. The whole undertaking, in short, was ill-conceived and ill-prepared. All the important officers, as Wolfe admits in his journal, disapproved of it, though he noted that they could propose nothing better. He himself put his finger on one defect of the plan when he said in a letter to Saunders, “The great fault of that day consists in putting too many men into boats, who might have been landed the day before, and might have crossed the ford [of the Montmorency] with certainty, while a small body only remained afloat; and the superfluous boats of the fleet employed in a feint that might divide the enemy’s force.” A sudden concentration of strength against the French left — preferably early in the morning — might have resulted in the capture of the French trenches on that wing, though even then it would have been hard to hold them or to advance from them. But to advertise his intentions for hours, as Wolfe did, was simply to court failure. It has been suggested that the attack was not meant to be seriously pressed, and that it was merely part of an elaborate scheme for diverting the enemy’s attention from Wolfe’s plans for landing beyond the city. But apart from the employment in the affair of nearly the whole army, Wolfe’s journal, dispatches, and letters show that while he was not very sanguine, he hoped that the blow would be decisive.

The month of August was comparatively uneventful. Wolfe clung to the Montmorency camp, for he still cherished the notion that it might serve as base for a successful offensive against

Montcalm's entrenchments; but he attempted no big operation in this quarter. The weather was bad, and there were many sick in the British army. The troops, however, soon began to recover from the depression caused by the defeat of July 31. Among the officers confidence in Wolfe was perhaps somewhat impaired; even Carleton, according to Wolfe's aide-de-camp Bell, was guilty of "abominable behaviour" towards him. But, so far as we can tell, most of the force continued to admire and trust him. After all, considering that they were conducting a difficult siege in the heart of a hostile country, the troops were remarkably well off. By Wolfe's command they now had a daily ration of rum. It was possible for officers and men to buy small luxuries at low prices. And they were provided with a certain amount of fresh meat and vegetables from the farms of the *habitants*. These were being raided with much vigour. The rule was that farms and villages were destroyed, churches being spared and prisoners placed on transports in the river. The north shore opposite the Ile d'Orléans seems to have suffered especially, and Wolfe, we are told, asserted his determination to "burn all the country from Kamouraska to Point Lévy," a threat which was in part carried out by Major Scott with 1600 regulars and rangers during the first three weeks of September. Occasionally the British exceeded their instructions, and a certain Captain Montgomery — brother of the general who afterwards besieged Quebec during the American rebellion — disgraced himself by slaughtering several prisoners who had fallen into his hands in the course of a fight at Château Richer, his offence being aggravated by the fact that two of them had been promised quarter by another officer. But the emphasis with which writers on both sides mention this incident shows that such excesses must have been rare. In his orders Wolfe never went beyond the limits sanctioned by the international law of that day, and a dispute between him and Vaudreuil, in which each accused the other



XV. VIEW OF THE BASIN FROM THE CITADEL OF QUEBEC

From an engraving by R. Wallis after a drawing by W. H. Bartlett, appearing in Bartlett's "Canadian Scenery," London 1840. The engraving gives a commanding view of the approach to Quebec. On the right is Point Lévy; above it, the South Channel; above that, the Ile d'Orléans; then, in the middle of the background, the North Channel; towards the left, the cove of Montmorency; and, finally, the coast of Beauport running to the mouth of the St. Charles River beyond the extreme left. Few of the buildings shown were standing in 1759.

of breaking an agreement concluded by the British and French governments for the exchange of prisoners, seems to show that both sides were equally, if at all, to blame.

There were occasional skirmishes, with varying fortune, on the Montmorency front, but it was above the town that the greatest activity was shown. The French ships of war were anchored just below the Richelieu rapids. If they could be destroyed, Wolfe thought, a force might be sent far up the river in boats to threaten the communications of Bourlamaque, who was facing Amherst. The enterprise was entrusted to Murray, who was given 1200 men, a flotilla of flat-bottomed boats, and the support of Admiral Holmes's squadron. The raid achieved little, partly no doubt, because the *Lowestoft*, the *Hunter*, and three smaller vessels, which were to have participated, failed on the night of the 11th to get past the town. Murray was away from August 5 to August 25, and towards the end of the time Wolfe was much concerned at his prolonged absence. The French ships withdrew a long way up stream and the British apparently made no attempt to follow them. Montcalm increased to 1000 and later to 1600 the French force on the north shore above the town, and on August 8 Bougainville, its commander, repulsed with loss two attempts of Murray to land at Pointe aux Trembles. For a time the British had a camp at Saint-Nicholas on the south shore, but this seems to have served no valuable purpose. Their most successful undertaking was a raid on Deschambault, where a complete surprise was achieved and they burned a store-house said to contain "all the effects, including equipage and apparel, of all the officers in Quebec, civil and military, besides arms and ammunition, the whole valued at 90,000 pounds sterling money." On Bougainville's hurried arrival, the British withdrew to their boats. The immunity with which they were able to remain for days thirty or forty miles above Quebec exposed the French generals to much criticism; but it is questionable

whether the operation benefited the British, seeing that it put the French on the alert and led Montcalm to reinforce Bougainville.

The besiegers were certainly not making much progress towards the attainment of the object. It was ominous that on August 22 the guns in the British batteries were limited to twenty-five rounds a day and the mortars to forty-five. It is true that from prisoners taken by Murray it was learned that the French, having abandoned Ticonderoga and Crown Point, had fallen back before Amherst to Ile aux Noix. The capture of Fort Niagara was also reported. But it was evident that these events were not to make much difference to Wolfe's prospects at Quebec. His success must depend on his own efforts. This he fully realised, and the very day after the Montmorency disaster he was preparing for another big stroke. On August 15 his intentions were sufficiently mature to be communicated to Townshend. The attack was to be made about August 24, but of its character nothing can be learned, except that it was to culminate with an assault on the city. The plan, however, was rendered abortive by the failure of Murray to return when expected.

"I have no more anxiety about Quebec," wrote Vaudreuil after the fight of July 31. Montcalm of course said nothing so silly; but there is no doubt that the victory increased the confidence of him and his soldiers. Yet the lot of the French was not a happy one. Exaggerated reports of Amherst's advance led Montcalm, in the first part of August, to send the Chevalier de Lévis to Montreal with 1000 men — a grave loss, though it was robbed of much of its importance by the success with which it was for several weeks concealed from the British. There was still a good deal of food in the town; notwithstanding the lack of transport 700 barrels of pork and flour arrived by road at the beginning of August; and about a week before the end of the month a big convoy of provisions managed to get down the river from Montreal. But, thanks to the corruption of officials and

hoarding by private individuals, the provisions were very unevenly distributed, and a great part of the population of the city was in serious distress. Meanwhile the Canadian militia saw with dismay the smoke rising from burning villages, while even those whose farms were beyond reach of the British knew that their crops were going to waste through lack of labour to reap them. Their urgent petitions for leave in order to save the harvest were perforce refused by the Higher Command; and though some nevertheless went home, with or without the connivance of their officers, their numbers were not sufficient to make much difference to the economic outlook. Even if Quebec held out against the British, what would be the fate of its people next winter? It was likely, indeed, that many would lack shelter as well as food; for the British guns continued to work great havoc, causing in the Lower Town a fire which gutted 160 houses, and inflicting much damage on the northern suburbs.

Except for the incessant dogging of Holmes's ships by Bougainville, the French troops remained almost passive. On the evening of August 10 there was another attempt to burn the British fleet. This time the engine of destruction, called a fire-organ, was a box containing a number of metal tubes crammed with bits of iron and lead. This was placed on a boat, which was rowed towards the British ships, the crew being instructed to make their escape after igniting a slow match, which, it was hoped, would explode a train of gunpowder after the boat had been grappled by the British sailors. The train was ignited prematurely, and the British lost only four men. More commendable was a proposal made late in the month by Captain Vauquelin, the hero of the French squadron at Louisbourg the year before, who now offered with two frigates and five or six hundred men to capture Holmes's flagship, the *Sutherland*. Vaudreuil thereupon planned a general attack with five frigates on all the British ships above the town, but insisted on giving the

command to a favourite of Cadet's. The French preparations for this stroke caught the attention of the British, and on the 27th Saunders reinforced Holmes with the ships which had failed to join him sixteen days before, but now, despite the efforts of the French gunners, got past the town with little loss. The French project was immediately abandoned.

All the schemes and doings that have just been recorded were of small moment compared with the state of Wolfe's health. Bad as it already was, the Montmorency catastrophe evidently made it worse, till on August 19 he was unable to rise. For some ten days he lay, in great suffering of mind and body, in the farmhouse which was his headquarters near the Montmorency Falls. How depressed he was is shown by his dispatch to Pitt, begun before his collapse. He was on bad terms with Townshend and annoyed with Murray; Saunders had objected to some passages in his report of the recent battle, on the ground that they were not fair to the navy; he was estranged even from his friend Carleton. Wolfe's ailment was spoken of in the army as a "slow fever"; probably it was a "flare-up" of his tuberculosis. He was able throughout to give instructions to Monckton through Barré; but he was not prepared to order important operations which he could not direct in person. He decided therefore that he ought to ask the opinion of the brigadiers as to the strategy which the army should now pursue. This resolve must have cost him much, for he knew well that he had been criticised for not consulting them enough, and if their advice should lead to a successful issue, not only would all the credit go to them but he would stand convicted as an incompetent egoist. For this, however, he perhaps cared less than one might suppose, since he believed himself to be a ruined man and probably knew that he was dying. In any case, Quebec must be taken, no matter who won the glory.

CHAPTER XIV
THE “DESPERATE PLAN,” AUGUST AND
SEPTEMBER, 1759

WOLFE’S letter to the brigadiers and their reply are so vital to an estimate of his military capacity that the greater part of them must be given word for word.

Head Quarters, Montmorency, Augst. 1759.

“To the Brigadiers,

“That the public service may not suffer by the General’s indisposition, he begs the Brigadiers will be so good to meet, and consult together for the public utility and advantage, and to consider of the best method of attacking the Enemy.

“If the French Army is attacked and defeated, the General concludes the town would immediately surrender, because he does not find they have any provisions in the place.

“The General is of opinion the army should be attacked in preference to the place, because of the difficulties of penetrating from the lower to the upper Town. . . .

“There appears [*sic*] three methods of attacking this Army.

“1st, In dry weather a large detachment may march in a day and a night so as to arrive at Beauport (fording the Montmorency 8 or 9 miles up) before day in the morning—it is likely they could be discovered upon this march on both sides the River. If such a detachment penetrates to their intrenchment and the rest of the Troops are ready, the consequence is plain.

“2dly, If the troops encamped here passed the ford with the falling water and in the night march on directly towards the point of Beauport, the Light Infantry have a good chance to get

up the Woody Hill, trying different places and moving quick to the right, would soon discover proper places for the rest. The upper redoubts must be attacked and kept by a company of Grenadiers. Brigadier Monckton must be ready off the point of Beauport to land when our people have got up the hill. . . .

“3dly, All the chosen troops of the Army attack at the Beauport at low water — a division across the ford an hour before the other attack.

“N:B: For the 1st it is enough if the water begins to fall a little before day light or about it. For the other two it would be best to have it low water about half an hour before day. The General thinks the country should be ruined and destroyed, as much as can be done consistent with a more capital operation.

“N. There are guides in the Army for the detachment in question.”

This letter no doubt reflects faithfully what Wolfe wished to convey, but it would have been better expressed if he could have written it himself. It is clear that since the reverse on July 31, he had given further consideration to the difficulties of an attack on the Beauport lines. But none of his proposals is impressive. He himself evidently thought but little of the first, and not much of the third. The second seemed to combine most of the disadvantages of the scheme of July 31 with a number of additional risks. There is reason to believe, however, that Wolfe secretly favoured quite a different plan, but thought it useful to test the value of the suggestions put forward by getting the considered opinion of the brigadiers upon them. It is even possible that he welcomed the condemnation which they hastened to express. His letter was in their hands on August 29 and next day he received the following reply:

“The natural strength of the Enemy’s situation, between the River St. Charles and the Montmorency, now improved by all the art of their engineers, makes the defeat of the French Army

if attacked there very doubtful. The advantage their easy communication on shore has over our attacks from boats and the ford of the Montmorency is evident from late experience, and it cannot be denied that that part of the Army which is proposed to march thro' the woods nine miles up the Montmorency to surprise their Army is exposed to certain discovery, and consequently to the continual disadvantage of a wood fight. — But allowing we got footing on the Beauport side, the M. de Montcalm will certainly still have it in his power to dispute the passage of the St. Charles, till the place is supplied with two months provisions (the utmost you can lie before it) from the ships and magazines above from which it appears they draw their subsistence.

“ We, therefore, are of opinion that the most probable method of striking an effectual blow is by bringing the troops to the south shore and directing our operations above the Town. When we have established ourselves on the north shore, of which there is very little doubt, the M. de Montcalm must fight us upon our own terms, we are between him and his provisions and betwixt him and the French army opposing General Amherst. If he gives us battle and we defeat him, Quebec must be ours, and, which is more, all Canada must submit to His Majesty's arms, a different case from any advantage we can hope for at Beauport, and should the enemy pass the St. Charles with force sufficient to oppose this operation, we can still with more ease and probability of success execute your third proposition (in our opinion the most eligible of the three you have made), or any other attempt on the Beauport shore, necessarily weakened by detachments made to oppose us above the Town.

“ With respect to the expediency of making an immediate attack, or the postponing it to be able the more effectually to prevent the harvest and destroy the Colony; or with a view of facilitating the operations of our armies now advancing into the heart of the country, we cannot take upon us to advise, altho' we can-

not but be convinced that a decisive affair to our disadvantage must enable the Enemy to make head against the army under the command of General Amherst already far advanced by the diversion this army has made on this side."

In order to give effect to the advice contained in this letter, the brigadiers drew up a detailed plan of operations. The camp at the Montmorency should be abandoned. Six hundred men (including a body of marines) were to be left on the Ile d'Orléans, and 600 at Point Lévy, while 1000 should man and protect the batteries opposite the town. For landing the rest of the army above the town, two alternative schemes were put forward. According to the first, the whole force should camp on the west side of the Etchemin river, whence 2500 should be embarked in boats, the remainder in ships. As soon as the boats had put their contingents ashore, the troops should be landed from the ships. The landing, which should be carried out at night, might easily be made anywhere between the Height of St. John¹ and the Cap Rouge river. In the alternative proposal it was suggested that 2000 men should be embarked in boats off Point Lévy at low water about midnight. By break of day these could have been landed half a league above the mouth of the Cap Rouge river. The ships lying above the town must previously have been filled with troops from Goreham's post, near the Etchemin; these would follow at once, and thus 4000 men might be landed in one tide. While the operation was in progress, all other available men should march up to the Etchemin, whence, with artillery and supplies they might join their comrades next night.

¹ So far as I know, the "Height of St. John" is mentioned in no other document relating to the siege of Quebec. No subsequent historian seems to have investigated its whereabouts, nor have I found any eminence of that name marked on any map. Mr. Louis Carrier, who is very familiar with the neighbourhood in question, has made the happy suggestion that the brigadiers had in mind the steep wooded cliffs at Saint-Jean Baptiste des Ecureuils, commonly called simply Les Ecureuils, about three miles east of the mouth of the Jacques Cartier river.

When critically examined, the letter and memorandum of the brigadiers do not seem very helpful. They betray some confusion of thought, as when it is suggested that an attack might still be made at Beauport after a landing in force had been carried out beyond the city. Evidently, too, the brigadiers did not know much about the fortifications of Quebec, or they would not have suggested that the city could hold out for two months after the British had forced the passage of the St. Charles. Their plan of operations deals clearly with the easy problems and becomes vague when it approaches difficult ones, while it assumes throughout that the French will remain blind, deaf, and motionless while the British movements are in progress. The two documents are characteristic products of dull, pedantic, and self-complacent minds. We can be sure that they contain no idea of importance which Wolfe had not thought of before. Nevertheless, he told the brigadiers that in the main he approved of their advice, apparently giving them to understand that the first of their alternative plans was to be followed. He had, however, no great hopes of success, whether from the project of the brigadiers or from any other.

Of Wolfe's state of mind at this moment we can form a fairly clear notion. A ship was about to sail for England, and in it went Wolfe's last letter to his mother, and a long dispatch from him to Pitt, together with one from Saunders to the Admiralty. Wolfe was feeling better, though he remained very ill. "Don't talk to me of constitution," he once exclaimed, speaking of a delicate man; "he has spirits, and spirits will carry a man thro' anything." He was now proving the truth of that in his own person. It was about this time that he said to his surgeon, "I know perfectly well you cannot cure my complaint; but patch me up so that I may be able to do my duty for the next few days, and I shall be content." But there is never a hint of his sufferings in his letter to his mother.

“Banks of the River St. Lawrence, 31 Aug. 1759.

“Dear Madam,

“My writing to you will convince you that no personal toils (worse than defeats and disappointments) have fallen upon me; the enemy puts nothing to risk, and I can’t in conscience put the whole army to risk. My antagonist has wisely shut himself up in inaccessible intrenchments so that I can’t get at him, without spilling a torrent of blood, and that perhaps to little purpose. The Marquis de Montcalm is at the head of a great number of bad soldiers and I am at the head of a small number of good ones, that wish for nothing so much as to fight him — but the wary old fellow avoids an action, doubtful of the behaviour of his army. People must be of the profession to understand the disadvantages and difficulties we labour under, arising from the uncommon natural strength of the country. I approve entirely of my Father’s disposition of his affairs, though perhaps it may interfere a little with my plan of quitting the service, which I am determined to do the first opportunity; I mean so as not to be absolutely distressed in circumstances; nor burdensome to you or to anybody else. I wish you much health, and am, Dear Madam, your obedient and affectionate son,

“Jam. Wolfe.

“If any sums of money are paid to you of what is due to my Father from the Government let me recommend you not to meddle with the Funds, but keep it for your support until better times.”

Wolfe’s dispatch to Pitt is one of the most famous documents of its class. It covers the course of events from the beginning of the siege to September 2. It has been much used in the foregoing pages; but the following passages may most suitably be quoted at the point we have now reached.

“The Admiral’s dispatches and mine would have gone eight or ten days sooner, if I had not been prevented from writing by a fever. I found myself so ill, and am still so weak, that I begged the general officers to consult together for the public utility. They are all of opinion, that, as more ships and provisions are now got above the town, they should try, by conveying up a corps of four or five thousand men, which is nearly the whole strength of the army, after the Points of Levi and Orleans are left in a proper state of defence, to draw the enemy from their present situation, and bring them to an action. I have acquiesced in their proposal, and we are preparing to put it into execution. . . .

“To the uncommon strength of the country the enemy have added, for the defence of the river, a great number of floating batteries and boats: by the vigilance of these, and the Indians round our different posts, it has been impossible to execute anything by surprise. . . . By the list of disabled officers . . . you may perceive that the army is much weakened. By the nature of the river, the most formidable part of this armament is deprived of the power of acting, yet we have almost the whole force of Canada to oppose.

“In this situation there is such a choice of difficulties, that I own myself at a loss how to determine. The affairs of Great Britain, I know, require the most vigorous measures; but then the courage of a handful of brave men should be exerted, only where there is some hope of a favourable event. However you may be assured, Sir, that the small part of the campaign which remains shall be employed (as far as I am able) for the honour of His Majesty and the interest of the nation; in which I am sure of being well seconded by the Admiral and the Generals. Happy if our efforts here can contribute to the success of his Majesty’s arms in any other part of America.”

When the dispatch was published in England, its style was much praised; but it was naturally regarded as an attempt to prepare the mind of the nation for tidings of decisive failure. Wolfe's frame of mind at the time is further illuminated by a passage in a letter which he wrote to Saunders a few days before; "I am sensible," he said, "of my own errors in the course of the campaign; see clearly wherein I have been deficient; and think a little more or less blame to a man that must necessarily be ruined, of little or no consequence." His despondent reference to "the small part of the campaign which remains" gains point from Saunders' announcement to the Admiralty, dated September 5, that he would "very soon send home the great ships," a resolve that must not be forgotten if the events that ensued are to be rightly judged.

If the plan of the brigadiers was to take effect, the first step must be the evacuation of the camp on the Montmorency. This was a perilous undertaking; but so skilfully was it organised that, begun on September 1, it was completed early on the 3rd without the loss of a man or a gun. Most of the French did not know what was happening until the camp was empty. For a while Montcalm thought that the movements of the British portended an offensive at Beauport. He was blamed by some for not attacking when at length he realised what was taking place; but he asserted, probably with truth, that the British, hoping he would do so, had laid a trap for him. Montcalm on the whole regretted that the camp was abandoned, for he did not know where its garrison had gone. He was of course aware that the British had increased their naval force above the town; but he still kept the bulk of his army in the Beauport lines, though he now strengthened his right at the expense of his left. At the same time, however, he stationed the regiment of Guienne on the heights west of Quebec, so that it could hasten to the city, to the St. Charles, or to Sillery, as emergency required. The

French, however, benefited by the British withdrawal from the Montmorency in that they were now able to harvest the crops along the Beaupré shore opposite the Ile d'Orléans. They found them scarcely damaged, perhaps because the British had themselves intended to reap them; and this accession to their supplies was most welcome and momentous.

Meanwhile, Wolfe was rapidly transferring troops to the ships above the town. The operation was carried out with much skill, partly from Point Lévy, partly from the Etchemin. By the evening of September 7 there were 3000 men distributed among the seventeen ships between Sillery and Cap Rouge. That this large force was on shipboard was in itself a departure from the advice of the brigadiers. Their plans, indeed, were already betraying their weaknesses. They had not named any definite landing-place, but they had indicated a preference for a spot about a mile and a half above Cap Rouge. When, however, the shores thereabouts were reconnoitred, it was found that the French had half a dozen floating batteries on guard near the favoured place and were digging trenches along the adjacent shore. Though the brigadiers seem still to have wanted to attempt a landing there, they went with Wolfe on September 7 to have a look at Pointe aux Trembles, though one might have supposed its characteristics to be sufficiently well known. It was decided — or so the brigadiers believed — to risk a descent there on September 9, but a downpour of rain, which lasted for two days, compelled the postponement of the project. Meanwhile, Wolfe had been visiting the ships in turn, and finding that the soldiers were suffering greatly from over-crowding, he had 1500 landed at Saint-Nicholas. By this time of course the French knew that the troops on the ships up the river had been reinforced; but they were quite bewildered as to their numbers or intentions, and the disembarkation of so large a body increased their perplexity. The British guns went on bombarding the city.

On the 7th Saunders sent a large number of boats towards the Beauport shore—a mere demonstration, which achieved its purpose by confirming Montcalm in his nervousness about the safety of this sector. As usual, his intelligence service was misleading him, for he believed that the greater part of the British army was still at the Ile d'Orléans or Point Lévy. Nevertheless, he cannot have been pleased when on September 7 Vaudreuil ordered the Guienne regiment to withdraw from the Plains of Abraham.

If the French were utterly at a loss as to Wolfe's designs, his own side was almost equally in the dark. It was generally believed in the British force that a landing was to be attempted somewhere above Cap Rouge, and after September 7 the more important officers understood that the place was to be Pointe aux Trembles. But it is most probable that Wolfe never intended to land here, or indeed anywhere beyond Cap Rouge. When informing Saunders of his concurrence with the strategy of the brigadiers, he said, "My ill state of health hinders me from executing my own plan; it is of too desperate a nature to order others to execute." There is no further hint as to the nature of this plan; but it is extremely likely that it was the one ultimately adopted. For Wolfe immediately began to take the very measures that he would have taken had the successful scheme been already in his mind. That 3000 men should be crowded into the ships above the town, and kept there for some days, was no part of the brigadiers' plan; but it was essential to the success of Wolfe's. If his health proved too treacherous for him to take command, the 3000 men could be handed over to the brigadiers, who might either revert to one of their own schemes or adjust themselves to the existing situation. It seems that for a day or two after his note to Saunders, he felt better, and so began to prepare for the execution of his own project. He overtaxed his strength, however, and on September 4 had a relapse which pros-

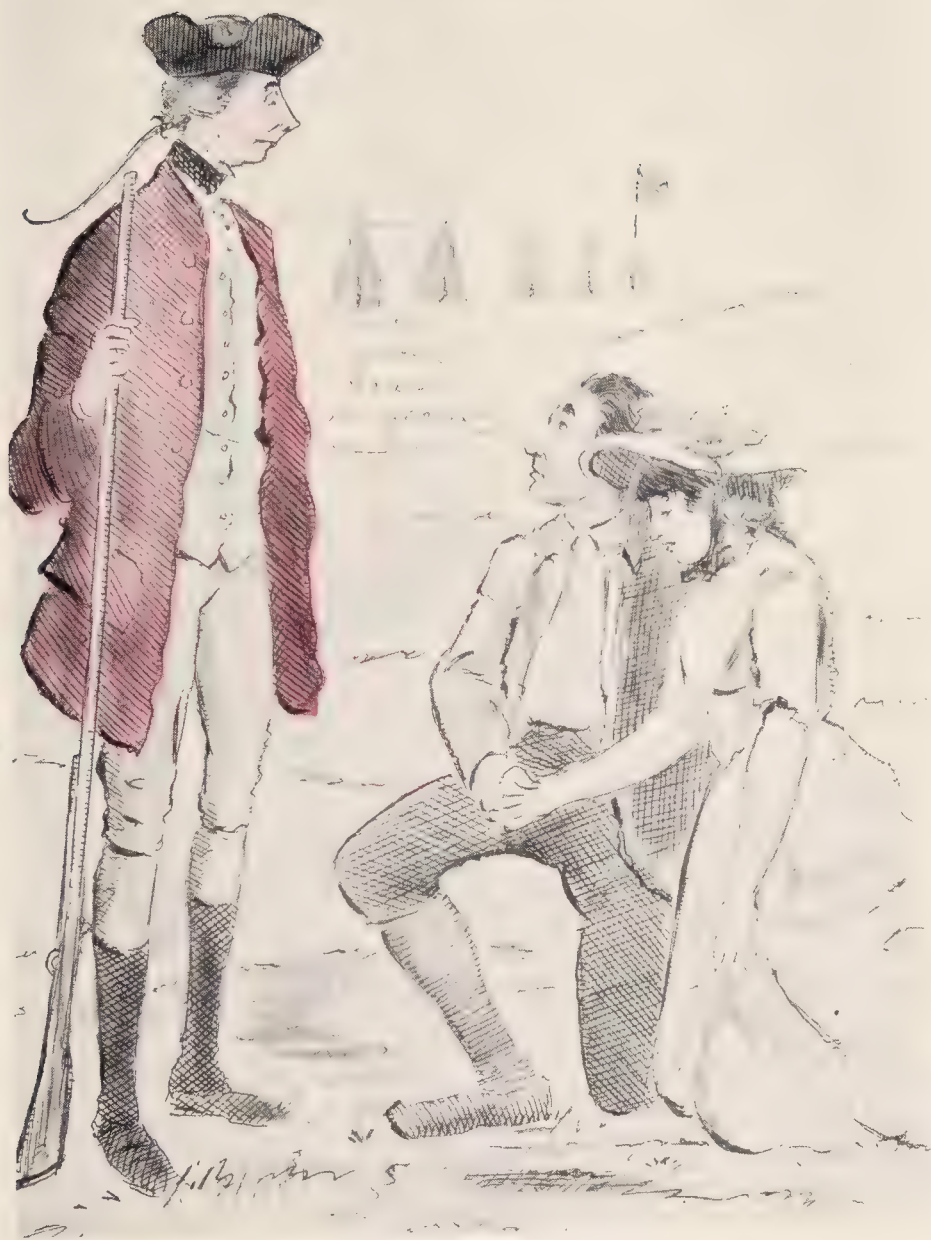
trated him on the following day. But he rallied in a most astonishing way, was well enough on the 6th to go aboard the *Sutherland*, and thenceforward set his mind on the accomplishment of the desperate enterprise which only he could direct. It is likely that the reconnaissance to Pointe aux Trembles next day was deliberately intended to turn the eyes of the army in the wrong direction. On the 8th, however, while some of the ships were demonstrating towards Pointe aux Trembles, Wolfe was spying out the land towards Quebec. Two days later he took with him Holmes, Monckton, Townshend, Carleton, Mackellar, Captain Chads (of the *Vesuvius* fireship), and Captain De Laune (an old officer of the 20th, in whom he had much confidence), and, ineffectually disguised as grenadiers, they inspected the north shore from a hillock near the mouth of the Etchemin. It has commonly been supposed that the purpose of this excursion was to discover a landing place; but it is far more likely that its object was to let Wolfe's companions see a place which he had already selected. The personnel of the party shows that Wolfe had in mind the details of the plan which he was to carry out. Correspondence between him and the brigadiers proves that there was no discussion of what they saw; Wolfe meant the others merely to take note of it. A letter written that night on the *Sutherland* puts it beyond doubt that before returning to the ship Wolfe had disclosed some part of his plan to Colonel Burton, who was in command at Point Lévy. It seems certain, in short, that Wolfe's scheme had been fully hatched for some time.

The spot which Wolfe had shown to his companions was the Anse au Foulon, a small cove about a mile and a half above Quebec. From the head of the cove a steep but short gully, breaking the line of cliffs, gives access to the heights. Up this gully ran a winding track, rough but easily climbed. At the time, however, it was blocked near the top by an abattis, and its surface had purposely been broken up. At the head of the gully, more-

over, was a post of 100 men under Captain Vergor, one of Bigot's gang, an officer of proved incompetence and questionable courage.

It was on the shore below that Wolfe proposed to land at dawn on September 13. About half the troops then up the river were to be placed in boats, fall downstream on the ebb, and disembark in the cove. The other half were to stay on the ships, which should follow close behind and land them as soon as the first contingent had made good its footing. Twelve hundred men, drawn from the Etchemin camp, Point Lévy, and the Ile d'Orléans were then to be rowed across from the south shore. If all went well Wolfe would have 1700 men on the plateau before Montcalm knew what was happening, and nearly 5000 before he could do anything. He wisely intended to use almost every man who could be spared from essential tasks elsewhere. Once he was on the heights, he reasoned, Montcalm must hurry across the St. Charles and try to drive him off. He would probably attack at once, for he would not wish to give Wolfe time to entrench himself or bring up guns. Moreover, if he could be deluded into underestimating the strength of the British force, he might do something rash.

That the plan just described was Wolfe's own has been established once for all by Dr. Doughty and Colonel Wood; and in a book of this scope it would be out of place to detail the evidence on which this conclusion rests. The proposal of the brigadiers was to land at or above Cap Rouge, and its execution would have had results quite different from those which followed Wolfe's descent at the Foulon. It has been argued that it was from the brigadiers that Wolfe got the idea of attacking above the town; but, as we have seen, he had thought of doing so even before he reached Quebec. His final plan, in fact, was very much like the design which he had intended to carry out in July. But between that scheme and the one which he had now conceived



XVI. A CARICATURE OF WOLFE BY GENERAL TOWNSHEND

Drawn before Quebec in 1759. From the original pen and ink (wash-coloured) drawing in the McCord National Museum, McGill University.

there was a vital difference. In the first, the troops were to be transported up the river to the landing-place; in the second, they were to be moved downwards. The chances of effecting a surprise were thus immensely increased; for it is not usual for a general to transport troops a long way from his base in order to land them near it. In this case, if the men of the leading division had been embarked at Point Lévy or the Etchemin, they could not have escaped the notice of the French at Quebec or Sillery; whereas they might enter the boats from the ships beyond Cap Rouge without being seen, and drop downstream on an ebb tide without being heard. If Wolfe's plan bears the mark of genius, it is not because of the place where the attack was made, but because of the direction whence it was launched.

The scheme was brilliant, but most hazardous. Unless the surprise was complete it would almost certainly end in total failure. Few as they were, Vergor's men, if on their guard, could probably have held their position until the arrival of adequate help. There was, too, the danger that they might be reinforced at the last moment. In fact, on September 12, Montcalm, who had misgivings about the Foulon — perhaps because a French sentry had reported that a party of disguised British officers had been staring at it two days before — ordered the Guienne regiment to return to the heights near the cove. Had it been there next morning Wolfe would have been foiled. But Vaudreuil was at hand to save him. Apparently out of mere pique, he countermanded Montcalm's order, saying that he would look into the matter on the morrow. And so indeed he did.

Wolfe did all he could to eliminate risk. He knew from deserters that the Guienne regiment had been moved away on the 7th; he had accurate information about the numbers and morale of Vergor's men; he was well aware of Vergor's reputation. But he recognised that he was tempting fortune very far, and he had no confidence in the issue. On the 9th he had addressed to

Lord Holderness, one of the Secretaries of State, the last dispatch he was to write. Its closing paragraph runs thus: "The extreme heat of the weather in August and a good deal of fatigue threw me into a fever, but that the business might go on, I begged the Generals to consider amongst themselves what was fittest to be done. Their sentiments were unanimous that (as the easterly winds begin to blow and ships can pass the town in the night with provisions and artillery, &c.) we should endeavour by conveying a considerable corps into the upper river, to draw them from their inaccessible situation, and bring them to an action. I agreed to the proposal; and we are now here, with about three thousand six hundred men waiting an opportunity to attack them when and wherever they can best be got at. The weather has been extremely unfavourable for a day or two, so that we have been inactive. I am so far recovered as to do business; but my constitution is entirely ruined; without the consolation of having done any considerable service to the State; or without any prospect of it." Wolfe's plan was well matured in his mind when he penned these words; ten days before he had called it "desperate," and as the time for its execution approached his confidence sank lower. Yet, whatever he might feel, the Wolfe who worked out the preparations for this enterprise was a very different man from the Wolfe who directed the operations of July 31. Whether his strategy might have been better will be considered below; but it was certainly good. And his tactical arrangements were admirable. Every joint of the machine clicked into its place, and the whole ran smoothly and under perfect control from beginning to end. In these last hours of his life, Wolfe proved himself a master of his craft.

On Tuesday, September 11, Wolfe issued detailed orders regarding the landing. By eight on the morning of the 12th all the troops were to be aboard. There were available thirty flat-bottomed boats, which, supplemented by five ships' boats and a

little schooner, could take about 1700 men, who would enter them at nine in the evening. Immediately after them were to come seven ships of war and two transports, carrying 1900 more soldiers. The control of the flotilla of boats was entrusted to Captain Chads, whom the troops were instructed to obey implicitly. An extra gill of rum was to be served and taken into the boats; the soldiers were to have with them their arms, ammunition, and two days' provisions, but nothing else. "The men," it was laid down, "are to be quite silent and when they are about to land, must not upon any account fire out of the boats." They were to "hold themselves in readiness to land and attack the enemy." A careful scrutiny of the orders might have warranted the inference that the proposed landing-place was a long way from the starting-point and probably down stream. But its position was not otherwise indicated, and as yet Wolfe had imparted its precise whereabouts to no one save Holmes, Chads, and Burton, who seems, however, not to have grasped the significance of what he had been told.

The next day must have been harassing for the nerves of all concerned in the undertaking. The troops at Saint-Nicholas were all got on board. The ships moved up and down between Cap Rouge and Pointe aux Trembles, much as they had done for some days past, leaving the French puzzled but without any ground for special apprehensions. The weather must have been the theme of anxious speculation among the British; and it is extraordinary how estimates of it varied from ship to ship. Thus, according to the *Sutherland's* log, the afternoon was marked by fresh gales and cloudy weather; according to the *Hunter's*, the gales were fresh but the weather clear; the *Seahorse*, while agreeing with the *Sutherland* about the clouds, considered that the gales were light; while the *Squirrel*, which thought the weather fair, would not recognise the presence of more than "light airs." It is first-hand testimony of this kind that brings

the historian to a premature mad-house; but fortunately there seems a general agreement that as the critical hours approached the weather became calm and cloudy, the best, in fact, for Wolfe's purpose.

Until late in the day Wolfe's secrecy about the landing-place was maintained. Its wisdom was justified by the fact that a soldier selected this moment to desert. On the other hand a French deserter alleged, falsely, that Montcalm was not expecting any attack near the city, and, truly, that he was still resolved to hold the Beauport lines in force, believing that most of the British army was below or opposite the town. This information left its mark on the following orders, the last which Wolfe issued to his army:

“On board the *Sutherland*.

“The Enemy's force is now divided, great scarcity of provisions now in their camp, and universal discontent among the Canadians; the second officer in command is gone to Montreal or St. John's, which gives reason to think that General Amherst is advancing into the colony; a vigorous blow struck by the army at this juncture may determine the fate of Canada. Our troops below are in readiness to join us; all the light artillery and tools are embarked at the point of Levi, and the troops will land where the French seem least to expect it.

“The first body that gets on shore is to march directly to the enemy, and drive them from any little post they may occupy; the officers must be careful that the succeeding bodies do not, by any mistake, fire upon those who go on before them. The battalions must form on the upper ground with expedition, and be ready to charge whatever presents itself. When the artillery and troops are landed, a corps will be left to secure the landing place, while the rest march on and endeavour to bring the French and Canadians to a battle.

“The officers and men will remember what their country expects from them, and what a determined body of soldiers, inured to war, is capable of doing against five weak French battalions, mingled with a disorderly peasantry.

“The soldiers must be attentive and obedient to their Officers, and resolute in the execution of their duty.”

This makes it clear that the landing was to be made down the river; but there is still no indication of the exact place. On the whole it is a good farewell, containing nothing theatrical or sentimental. That Wolfe believed it to be his last message to his troops is very likely. His mood during the day was calm and reflective, if we may judge from his celebrated declaration that he would rather have written Gray's *Elegy* than beat the French on the morrow.² Tradition has busied itself with Wolfe's disposal of his will and certain prized possessions on the night before his crowning exploit.³ Tradition, as so often happens, lacks foundation; but the will, which is highly characteristic, may conveniently be quoted at this point.

“*Neptune*, at Sea, 8th June, 1759.

“I desire that Miss Lowther's picture may be set in jewels to the amount of five hundred guineas, and return'd to her.

“I leave to Col. Oughton,⁴ Col. Carleton, Col. Howe,⁵ and Col. Warde a thousand pounds each.

“I desire Admiral Saunders to accept of my light service of plate, in remembrance of his guest.

“My camp equipage, kitchen furniture, table linen, wine and

² For further discussion of this notorious assertion, see Appendix I.

³ See Appendix II.

⁴ Lieut. Col. James Adolphus Oughton, of the 37th Regiment, became colonel of the 55th on July 20, 1759. He had been at Culloden and served in Flanders in 1747-8.

⁵ The Hon. William Howe, lieutenant-colonel of the 58th, afterwards in command of the Light Infantry.

provisions, I leave to the Officer who succeeds me in the command.

"All my books and papers both here and in England, I leave to Col. Carleton.

"I leave Major Barré, Capt. Delaune, Capt. Smyth, Capt. Bell,⁶ Capt. Lesslie & Capt. Calwall [*sic*]⁷ each a hundred guineas, to buy swords and rings in remembrance of their friend.

"My servant François shall have one half of my clothes and linen here, and the three footmen shall divide the rest amongst them.

"All the servants shall be paid their year's wages, and their board wages till they arrive in England, or till they engage with other masters, or enter into some other profession. Besides this, I leave fifty guineas to François, twenty to Ambrose, and ten to each of the others.

"Every thing over and above these legacies, I leave to my good mother, entirely at her disposal.

"Witnesses

"JAM: WOLFE."

"Will. De Laune

"Tho. Bell."

To this will there was the following codicil.

"Camp of Montmorency,
29th July 1759.

"When I made my Will, I did not exactly know the situation of my affairs — the following addition therefore to the legacies

⁶ Captains Hervey Smyth and Thomas Bell were aides-de-camp to Wolfe.

⁷ Matthew Leslie and Henry Caldwell had attracted Wolfe's notice at Louisbourg in 1758. On Wolfe's recommendation, each was appointed Deputy Quartermaster-General in the Quebec force.

shall be made. I give a thousand Pounds to Major Walter Wolfe, and a thousand Pounds to Captain Edward Goldsmith.

“ Witnesses

“ JAM: WOLFE.”

“ Her^y Smyth

“ Isaac Barré.”

Walter Wolfe was of course his uncle; Goldsmith was a kinsman. It is noteworthy that Wolfe thought of his military friends before them; and that he left no more to them than to Oughton and Howe, with whom he was not very intimate. Barré and the five captains mentioned in a later clause owed their presence with the expedition to Wolfe's recommendation. His concern for his servants is characteristic. It is significant that there is not even a complimentary bequest to any of the Brigadiers, though Monckton and Murray had been chosen by Wolfe himself. With the exception of Oughton and Warde, every man named in the original will was engaged in the expedition. That such an absent friend as Rickson, for instance, was ignored is most astonishing, and shows how thoroughly Wolfe was absorbed in his task.

Wolfe's mastery of the situation and of himself during his last hours appears plainly in two letters which he wrote shortly before the troops began to enter the boats. He had received from the brigadiers the following note:

“ On board the *Loestoft*,

“ Sept. 12th, 1759.

“ To Gen. Wolfe,

“ Sir,

As we do not think ourselves sufficiently informed of the several parts which may fall to our share in the execution of the descent you intend to-morrow, we must beg leave to request from you, as distinct orders as the nature of the thing will ad-

mit of, particularly to the place or places we are to attack. This circumstance (perhaps very decisive) we cannot learn from the public orders, neither may it be in the power of the naval officer who leads the Troops to instruct us. As we should be very sorry, no less for the public than our own sakes, to commit any mistakes, we are persuaded you will see the necessity of this application, which can proceed from nothing but a desire to execute your orders with the utmost punctuality.

“We are, Sir, etc.

ROBT. MONCKTON,
GEO. TOWNSHEND,
JAS. MURRAY.”

The letter was civil in tone, but a spirit of mutiny was but thinly concealed under its pompous phrasing. It had probably been in Wolfe's hands for some hours; but he did not answer it till the latest possible moment, when a revelation of his secret could scarcely do harm. He wrote two replies, one to Monckton, the senior brigadier, who was to go down with the boats, the other to Townshend, who was to follow in the ships and direct the landing of the troops on board. Both letters must be given in full. To Monckton he wrote thus, dating the letter “*Sutherland*, 8½ o'clock, 12th Sept., 1759.”

“Sir, — My reason for desiring the honour of your company with me to Goreham's post yesterday [*sic*]⁸ was to shew you, as well as the distance would permit, the situation of the enemy, and the place where I meant they should be attacked; as you are charged with that duty, I should be glad to give you all further light and assistance in my power. — The place is called the

⁸ Wolfe may of course have taken Monckton, Holmes, and Chads for a second reconnaissance of the Foulon on Sept. 11, but it is more probable that his memory was at fault, and that he ought to have said “the day before yesterday.” In his letter to Burton, referred to on p. 271, he spoke of “to-morrow,” when he meant the day after, and there is some confusion of dates in his journal.

Foulon distant upon two miles or two miles and a half from Quebec, where you remember an encampment of 12 to 13 tents and an abbatis below it. — You mentioned to-day that you had perceived a breastwork there, which made me imagine you as well acquainted with the place as the nature of things will admit of. I took Capt. Shads [*sic*] with me also and desired the Admiral's attendance, that as the former is charged by Mr. Saunders with conducting of the boats, he might make himself as much a master of his post as possible; and as several of the Ships of War are to fall down with troops, Mr. Holmes would be able to station them properly after he had seen the place. I have desired Mr. Holmes to send the boats down, so that we may arrive about half an hour before day, as you desired; to avoid the disorder of a night attack; and I shall be present myself, to give you all the aid in my power. The officers who are appointed to conduct the divisions of boats have been strictly enjoined to keep as much order and to act as silently as the nature of the service will admit of, and Capt. Shads will begin to land the men a little of this side of the naked rock, which you must remember to have seen, within which (to the eastward) the enemy is posted. It is not a usual thing to point out in the public orders the direct spot of an attack, nor for any inferior Officer not charged with a particular duty to ask instructions upon that point. I had the honour to inform you to-day, that it is my duty to attack the French Army. To the best of my knowledge and abilities I have fixed upon that spot where we can act with most force and are most likely to succeed. If I am mistaken I am sorry for it and must be answerable to his Majesty and the public for the consequences.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,
“ Your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ JAM: WOLFE.”

This was one of the best letters that Wolfe ever penned. Its companion, addressed to Townshend and dated identically, was little if at all inferior.

“Sir, — General Monckton is charged with the first landing and attack at the Foulon, if he succeeds you will be pleased to give directions that the troops afloat be set on shore with the utmost expedition, as they are under your command, and when the 3600 men now in the fleet are landed, I have no manner of doubt but that we are able to fight and to beat the French Army; in which I know you will give your best assistance.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,

“Your most obedient and most humble servant,

“JAM: WOLFE.”

That Murray received no personal answer was not a slight. He was Monckton's junior, had been ordered to accompany the boats, and, being presumably with Monckton at the time, would hear of Wolfe's reply through him. Probably he and Monckton were actually on the *Sutherland*. The dispatch of a separate letter to Townshend is most likely due to the fact that he was on another ship, perhaps the *Lowestoft*. The *Sutherland* seems to have had no troops on board that night, and she was not to go down the river with the second contingent. As Townshend was in command of that part of the force, it would have been natural for him to be on one of the ships which was to take part in its transportation; and it was in the *Lowestoft* that the brigadiers' letter, almost certainly inspired by Townshend, was written. Wolfe, however, probably welcomed the chance of discriminating between the two men. The letter to Monckton, notwithstanding the polite rebuke in the last paragraph, was friendly and sympathetic in tone; that to Townshend is one of the most effective snubs on record. It is astonishing that they should both have been preserved.

Several hours before penning the letters, according to the journal recently found at Belfast, Wolfe declared to some of his friends that two of the brigadiers were cowards and one was a villain; but whatever exasperation he may have expressed, it is unlikely that this is an accurate quotation. The same authority asserts that on the eve of the attack, Chads raised “many frivolous objections” to the plan, and that Wolfe strove to pacify him by offering to shoulder all the blame in the event of failure. Holmes, too, looked askance at the scheme, as he afterwards admitted. All things considered, Wolfe’s nerves must have been much relieved when the hour for action arrived and it became the duty of his critics to carry out orders without expostulation or question.

CHAPTER XV

VICTORY, SEPTEMBER 12 AND 13, 1759

AT NINE o'clock the troops began to get into the boats. It must be remembered that the ships were scattered over a long stretch of the river, and to assemble the boats in the dark was a delicate operation. In the leading boat were to be the twenty-four volunteers of the Light Infantry, who were to lead the "Forlorn Hope." They were not finally chosen till ten that night, when they at once took their allotted places. A terse note by one of them records "fine weather, the night calm, and silence over all." At half-past one a single light shone from the main topmast shrouds of the *Sutherland*, lying off Cap Rouge. It was the signal to the boats to drop down and assemble between her and the south shore. Here they were marshalled by Chads into their proper order, and Wolfe joined the foremost boat. After about half-an-hour two lights from the *Sutherland* conveyed the command to leave for the Foulon.

Meanwhile there was great activity near Quebec. During the day sailors had been laying buoys off the Beauport shore, towards which numerous ships' boats, crowded with armed men, pulled after dark. They lay for some hours at a little distance from land, just as they had done before the attack near the Montmorency. Montcalm and his troops passed a sleepless night. All the time, the batteries at Pointe aux Pères thundered as they had never done before. Something big was impending; of that all the French were sure, but the only officers who were at all easy in their minds were Vaudreuil, whose optimism had no warrant whatever, and Bougainville, who was conscientiously on the watch towards Pointe aux Trembles and may be excused

for thinking that, so far as he was concerned, the situation was well under control.

The voyage of the boats was not marked by many notable incidents. They started with a following breeze and a three-knot current; and, although the oars were scarcely used, progress was rapid. It was cloudy, there was no moon, and for some miles the boats hugged the south shore. There was thus little risk of detection. After a while, however, Wolfe proved that his secretiveness had its disadvantages. The *Hunter* sloop was anchored in mid-channel some two-and-a-half miles above the landing-place. The commander, who knew nothing of Wolfe's intentions, was questioning two French deserters who had been brought on board during the night. They had just told him that the French were at the moment expecting the arrival by water of a convoy of provisions, when the watch spied Wolfe's leading boats bearing down on the ship. The captain trained his guns on them, but Wolfe was alongside before they could fire. Not only was disaster averted, but the news about the French convoy was to stand the British in good stead a little later.

The boats had now to make across the stream for the north shore. There were known to be two French posts near the river bank before the Foulon. The first was passed without alarm, but at Sillery Point a sudden challenge rang out. From the leading boat Simon Fraser, a captain of the Highlanders, who spoke French well, answered "*France.*" "*A quel régiment?*" snapped the sentry. "*De la Reine,*" replied Fraser in a low tone, knowing that the expected convoy would probably be escorted by men from that regiment. The sentry was still suspicious: "*Pourquoi est-ce que vous ne parlez pas plus haut?*" he persisted. "*Tais-toi!*" brusquely muttered Fraser, "*nous serions entendus.*" The sentry, fearing lest he should betray to the British on the opposite bank the whereabouts of the precious convoy, relapsed into reluctant silence, the boats passed on, the hearts of the

British began to beat again. A few minutes later, at seven minutes past four, Wolfe's boat grounded on the eastern shore of the cove. The batteries at Pointe aux Pères drowned any noise which the approach of the flotilla might have caused. Wolfe was the first man ashore, speedily followed by De Laune, the twenty-four of the Forlorn Hope, and the two hundred Light Infantry who were to support them.

Wolfe had no intention of trying to force the path up the gully. About a hundred and fifty yards farther east there was, he had noticed, a projecting spur, whereby the top of the cliffs might be gained and Vergor's post taken in flank and rear. Thither he led the Forlorn Hope and their supports. "I don't think," he said to the leaders, "we can by any possible means get up here, but however we must use our best endeavour." Headed by Captain De Laune the men began to scramble up, and though the cliff was steep, craggy, and overgrown with thickets, it is evident from the reports of the ascent that it was not quite so bad as it looked. The crest was crowned with trees, and in the concealment which these afforded the leaders crept to the left as they reached the top. At the first challenge, a Highlander, imitating Fraser, opened a parley in French, and before the sentry detected the fraud, a strong party came charging with fixed bayonets. The alarm once given, most of the French fled in dazed panic, leaving Vergor, who was wounded, to be taken prisoner.

Such was the famous "scaling of the Heights of Abraham," the theme of much picturesque writing from that day to this. A first visit to the scene of the feat is almost always a disappointing experience. To climb from the beach to the point, two hundred feet above, where the party reached the top is well within the powers of any able-bodied person between the ages of ten and seventy. But since 1759 repeated landslides have changed the character of the place, which was unquestionably more precipi-

tous then than it is now. Contemporary writers give terrific accounts of its perils. Even Saunders, a man of sober speech, emphasises the incredible difficulty of the ascent, while one writer, an officer in the besieging force, says that henceforth he will think little of Hannibal's passage of the Alps. Nevertheless, when all things are considered — especially the horror of acclivities that beset the eighteenth-century mind — the exploit of the storming party cannot be accounted remarkable as an acrobatic or athletic performance. Its difficulty lay in the conditions under which it had to be accomplished; and though the lapping of the water in the cove, the souging of the wind in the trees, and, above all, the noise of the cannonade at Quebec were in favour of the storming-party, it cannot be denied that for more than two hundred men, with arms and accoutrements, to climb a steep cliff in the dim light of dawn without betraying themselves to sentries a hundred yards away was an astonishing and creditable achievement.

The cheer of the storming party told Wolfe that the surprise had been successful. The troops in the cove were immediately set in motion up the path, which became quite easy to ascend as soon as the obstacles erected by Vergor had been destroyed. Meanwhile the ships had arrived, and the troops which they carried were being rowed ashore, while about 1200 more were ferried across from Goreham's Post, where they had been waiting under Carleton and Burton. Some of the boats bringing the first contingent had inadvertently passed the Foulon, and were trying to land their men at the Anse des Mères, more than half way to Quebec, where they were fired upon by French pickets. On learning of this, Wolfe had himself rowed down and brought the wanderers back. Of course he should not have left the main force at this juncture, but his action was an excellent example of his impetuous energy and love of doing things for himself. His luck was in; for the blunder of the misguided

troops had no effect except to increase the bewilderment of the French.

By this time of course the French in the vicinity of the Foulon had grasped what was happening. The Samos battery, four hundred yards west of the cove, consisting of four 24-pounders and a 13-inch mortar, had begun to fire at the last boats of the first landing-party and had since maintained a vigorous cannonade which had caused some casualties. It was now easily captured by a body of Light Infantry and Grenadiers, and 170 of the former were told off to hold it. After this the landing proceeded according to plan. By six o'clock Wolfe had 4800 men on the heights.

He had already, with some of his advanced troops, crossed the level ground and surveyed the valley of the St. Charles. There all seemed quiet, nor was there any sign of alarm in the French lines towards Beauport. He then went eastward to a point a mile from the city, where the plateau narrowed to a width of three-quarters of a mile. Here it was traversed by an ill-defined and very low ridge, which near its southern extremity rose to a knoll, on which now stands the Quebec gaol. From this little ridge the city-walls were not visible, being concealed by a second ridge, rather better defined, the crest of which was about 800 yards distant. Wolfe chose as his battlefield the ground between the two. He returned to his army, assembled near the top of the Anse au Foulon,¹ and led it to the Sainte-Foye road, which it then followed until it reached the first rise mentioned

¹ In his edition of Knox's Journal (iii, 335 seq.), Dr. Doughty has printed what purports to be the verbatim report of a speech made by Wolfe to his army after it had assembled on the Heights. No contemporary narrative mentions any such speech, and its pompous and vainglorious wording is alone enough to prove that it was never actually delivered by Wolfe. It was perhaps an exercise by some writer who thought of inserting in his journal, after the fashion of Greek and Roman historians, what Wolfe might appropriately have said; or it might be a draft by one of Wolfe's staff who fondly hoped that his commander would find it useful.



XVII. VIEW OF WOLFE'S COVE

From an engraving by J. Cousen after a drawing by W. H. Bartlett, appearing in Bartlett's "Canadian Scenery," London 1810. The path up which Wolfe's army marched lies in the gully at the foot of the picture. The "Forlorn Hope" climbed steeper cliffs to the left, not shown in the drawing. The buildings at the foot of the cliffs were not standing in 1759.

above. Along this he deployed. His extreme right was on the knoll, which was held by the 35th, whose principal duty in the ensuing conflict was to cover the flank of their comrades. Next, and (owing to the nature of the ground), thrown a little forward, were the three companies of Louisbourg grenadiers. Then, in order, came the 28th, the 43rd, the 47th, the Highlanders, the 58th, and the 15th, who were posted just to the south of the Sainte-Foye road and had the duty of guarding the left flank. Behind them were placed the Light Infantry, facing north towards the valley in order to repel attacks from that quarter. In reserve were the 2nd Royal Americans, just behind the 58th, and the 48th, across the road from Sillery. The path from the cove to the heights was covered by the 3rd Royal Americans.

In the firing line were 3100 men. Over a thousand of these, however, were chiefly concerned with the protection of the army's flanks. The six battalions who faced Quebec and were destined to bear the main shock of battle had to cover a front of half a mile with only about 1800. Wolfe could not even have afforded to draw them up three deep, though such a formation was thought rather daring. So for the first time in a battle between armies of two civilised powers, one side fought with a line only two deep.² It was the authentic "thin red line" — fifty years before this formation was officially authorised in the British army. Wolfe's men were in array by eight o'clock. He was ready to fight, though as yet wholly without artillery.

Hitherto, apart from a little sniping on their left, the British had suffered no annoyance from the enemy since the capture of the Samos battery. The French were all at sixes and sevens. Montcalm, it cannot be denied, had been completely outgeneralled. Hearing the firing of the Samos guns, he had inferred that the British above the town were attacking the provi-

² Amherst and Wolfe had already shown in their orders that they favoured a two-deep line, but it had never been used by either in battle.

sion convoy, and was disturbed at the likelihood of losing the precious supplies it was bringing. But just then the men-of-war in the Basin opened a heavy bombardment on the Beauport lines, and his fears of an attack there returned in full force. When it became light, however, he was relieved to see no sign of any unusual activity at Point Lévy or on the Ile d'Orléans, so at about six he rode from Beauport to Vaudreuil's headquarters close to the St. Charles bridge to find out, if he could, what had been happening at the Samos battery. Luckily, in a *Life of Wolfe* we are not required to unravel the tangled reports of what followed. It seems certain that shortly before Montcalm's arrival the Governor had heard, through a rather incoherent message from the acting-commandant of the city, that the British had made a descent at the Foulon, were trying to land at the Anse des Mères, and were attacking the Lower Town. Though Vaudreuil may be pardoned for feeling perplexed, the information demanded something more than an order to Montcalm to take a hundred men and see what was going on. Vaudreuil next wrote a flippant dispatch to Bougainville, in which he admitted that the British had landed at the Foulon, but suggested that they were not in great strength. But immediately after leaving the Governor Montcalm learned the truth from a sick officer, who had hastened from the General Hospital with the tidings that he had seen the British force marching along the Sainte-Foye road, while a moment later he himself caught sight of Wolfe's men on the skyline of the Heights. "There they are where they have no right to be," he exclaimed. He called out all the troops near at hand, ordered the Guienne regiment forward to reconnoitre, and dispatched his aide-de-camp, the Scottish Jacobite Johnstone, to summon the whole of the French left wing from beyond Beauport. But when Johnstone delivered the message, he was told that Vaudreuil had just instructed the left wing to stay where it was, and it was only after much insistence that Mont-

calm succeeded in getting the support of the Royal Roussillon regiment, which had been stationed on this part of the front. Further, when he asked for twenty-five pieces of artillery from the town defences, the *Sieur de Ramezay* (who had returned from hospital when he heard of the crisis) refused to send more than three, pending the receipt of specific orders from the Governor. What with these hindrances, it was about eight o'clock before Montcalm knew the strength of the force which he would be allowed to use. By that time, his men had ascended the slope from the St. Charles to the comparatively level ground outside the St. John and St. Louis gates. Just to the west of the ground now occupied by the Parliament buildings—roughly along the line of the present Rue d'Artigny—Montcalm drew them up in quarter column, a belt of scrub on his right preventing deployment into line. He then assembled his staff, brigadiers, and battalion commanders, and held an informal council of war. Should they attack at once? Or should they try to secure reinforcements of men and guns? Would it be wise to await the arrival of Bougainville?

Even now, with Wolfe less than a mile distant and brisk skirmishing in progress, Montcalm was in the dark as to the strength and intentions of the British. Wolfe's position, invisible from the town, had been most skilfully chosen. During a hasty reconnaissance while his troops were collecting, Montcalm had seen only the British left and centre, as the men on the right were lying down, and he had gained the impression that the force was quite small. Obviously, then, they should be attacked before they could be strengthened. Scouts reported, too, that they were beginning to dig trenches. They would doubtless soon have landed artillery. Some feared lest they might by a sudden movement seize the St. Charles bridge and so cut the French army in two. Whatever advantage the French might gain by waiting would be more than counterbalanced by the increase in

strength which an hour or two would give the British. In short, many voices were raised for instant action, and not one against it. All things considered, it was almost certainly the right course, but it may be doubted whether, had Montcalm realised that Wolfe already had every available soldier with him, he would have acted quite as precipitately as he did.

For some time there had been many Canadians and Indians firing from cover at the British, mainly on the flanks. Montcalm now sent forward 1500 more to a wood on both sides of the Sainte-Foye road, facing and overlapping the British left. Their presence would render hazardous any sudden dash for the St. Charles bridge. Towards the British centre and right, too, the skirmishing became hotter. The British in their turn sent out sharpshooters, and there was a lively fusillade, in which the Canadians and Indians, adepts in such fighting, held the advantage. Soon after nine, however, the expectant British at last saw the French regulars on the skyline towards Quebec. Thereupon the six battalions which were to bear the shock moved forward a hundred paces, thus confirming Montcalm's belief that Wolfe was hardly ready. Montcalm now had room to extend into line and resolved to do so, for though an advance in columns might smash the British centre, it would expose his dense ranks to a murderous flanking fire. But to deploy in face of the enemy is a trying operation. The closely-arrayed French suffered much from the British skirmishers and still more from two six-pounder guns which had just reached the field. One of these was handled with great daring by Captain York, who ran it out along the Sillery road and opened on the French with grapeshot at a range of 300 yards, doing great execution among the men of the Royal Roussillon and unsteady the whole line.

More than half an hour passed while Montcalm was disposing his men to his liking. The skirmishing continued. The French

field-guns opened from the ridge and further back. York continued to work his impudent six-pounder. And all the while the British line of battle stood immovable, save when a man in the front rank fell and his place was instantly and silently filled from the rear. All the principal officers were present. Townshend was in charge of the left flank; Murray was with the centre of the battle front, Monckton with its right; Carleton was commanding the Grenadiers. Wolfe had put on a brand-new uniform — one of those acts of gallant folly for which we blame and love a man — and as he moved resplendently up and down the line his lanky figure and gawky gait made him trebly conspicuous. As he went he spoke genially to officers and men, emphasising earnestly his injunction that not a shot was to be fired until the enemy were within forty paces. When on the extreme left, he was hit on the wrist. Tying a handkerchief on the hurt, he moved back towards the centre. A musket ball struck him in the groin, but he seemed scarcely to feel it. Beyond doubt he was experiencing the greatest happiness of his life. It was fitting that the rain which had fallen earlier had now ceased, and that towards ten o'clock the sun broke through the clouds. He had in his last moments a magnificent spectacle on which to gaze — to the north, beyond the St. Charles, the great sweep of the Laurentian mountains — the backbone of French North America; to the south, beyond the St. Lawrence, the rolling hills that form the northern end of the Alleghanies — the backbone of the American colonies of Britain. But his mind was on the work in hand, and of the distant scene he was probably hardly conscious.

On the other side, Montcalm rode to and fro on his black horse, his gleaming steel cuirass, splendid as it looked, becoming well the representative of a doomed cause. He asked his men if they were tired, but with one accord they declared themselves eager to advance. He had no militia or Indians in line.

On the right was a battalion of colonial regulars, then came five battalions of troops from France, and the line was completed towards the left by two more battalions of colonials. These wore grey uniforms; the Frenchmen were in white, save for the Royal Roussillon regiment, whose uniform was blue. The officers were mostly good, and so were the majority of the French soldiers, but some of them, and all the colonial troops, were somewhat lax in discipline. The infantry on both sides carried flintlock muskets and bayonets, and in equipment there was little to choose between them.

Just as the French were ready, some of the British skirmishers, finding the enemy's fire too hot, ran back to the line of battle rather more hastily than their orders warranted, thus causing a momentary confusion. Montcalm seized this instant to signal the advance, and a few minutes after ten o'clock the French array surged forward, the centre being in line of quarter column, the wings six deep. If all the fighting men on the Heights be counted, the numbers of the two sides were nearly equal; but the number of French regulars on the field probably did not exceed 2500. These, however, were all in the battle-line, which consequently outnumbered that of the British, though its front was shorter. The French moved forward with a shout, and for some time came on fast. York continued firing until the latest possible moment, and then ran his gun back behind the British line, which still remained motionless with shouldered arms. Before long, however, the French began to show signs of waning confidence. At a range of about 300 yards, the colonials began firing without orders, and after their custom threw themselves on the ground to reload. This spoiled the general alignment of the advance, and, what was worse, many of them began to slink off and join the skirmishers under cover on the flanks. The French regulars marched on; but their line was now greatly overlapped by that of the British, and they instinctively sought

to protect their flanks by inclining outwards from their centre. Thus a great gap gradually appeared between the French centre and left until the 43rd and the 47th in the centre of the British line had no one confronting them. Presently the sundered array began to waver. First it stopped, and fired without orders; then it moved on a little way; then the disorderly fusillade was repeated; and so the five French battalions covered several score yards till they haltingly came within forty paces of the British. Wolfe had placed himself in front of the gap between the Louisbourg Grenadiers and the 28th, and as the enemy approached he viewed them, according to one who saw him, "with a countenance radiant and joyful beyond description." At last, as the French reached their appointed limit, he gave the word to fire, and from each of the six battalions, beginning on the right, there crashed out a double-shotted volley. So perfect was the musketry of the men that the sound was like six reports of a single gigantic gun.

Nearly every man in the French front rank went down, and when the smoke cleared the dismay of the survivors was pitiful to see, though they strove to maintain a semblance of order. But there was no respite. The British had at once reloaded, and, according to previous instructions, advanced twenty paces. Then another series of volleys was poured upon the French. For some five minutes the two sides stood thus, with barely the length of a cricket-pitch between them, the French falling fast and shooting at random, the British in perfect order and firing volleys as though at drill. Presently the Languedoc regiment, whose discipline was notoriously weak, showed signs of breaking; the 47th dashed forward with the bayonet, the Highlanders with the broadsword, and the whole French right gave way. On the left the Royal Roussillon held firm a little longer, but, despite Montcalm's efforts to rally it, began to flinch before the British musketry, and a well-judged charge completed its dis-

comfiture. Less than ten minutes after the first British volley the French line was shattered, and the men were fleeing for their lives.

But by the time this happened, the victors had lost their leader. It was, as nearly as one can judge, just after the first British volley, as the line moved forward its twenty paces, that Wolfe received a musket ball in the right breast. Lieutenant Brown, of the Louisbourg Grenadiers, and James Henderson, a volunteer in the same corps, bore him to the rear and laid him down about three hundred yards from the spot where he fell. A surgeon's mate, Hewit by name, belonging to the 48th regiment, came to his assistance, and there was probably a fourth person present, though who he was cannot be ascertained.³ It was at once evident that the wounded man had but a few minutes to live, and all that his companions could hope for was that they might ease his last sufferings. And this they were able to do, for one of them, who had moved a little way off to survey the battle, suddenly cried, "They run! see how they run." "Who runs?" asked Wolfe, rousing himself as though waking from sleep. "The enemy, sir," came the answer; "Egad, they give way everywhere." And then for a moment Wolfe came wholly to life again: "Go, one of you," he ordered, "to Colonel Burton; tell him to march Webb's regiment to Charles's river, to cut off the retreat to the bridge." After this, turning on his side he said, "Now I die content."

³ For a further consideration of Wolfe's last moments, see Appendix III.



XVIII. THE DEATH OF WOLFE

From an engraving owned by Dr. J. Clarence Webster. The original painting was executed by Edward Penny in 1764, and is now owned by Lord Leconfield.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SEQUEL

THIS is a Life of Wolfe, not a History of the British conquest of Canada. With the events that followed his death we are concerned only in so far as they throw light upon his character and abilities. Nor is this the place for a list of the monuments that have been erected to him, or a description of articles once belonging to him which are still to be seen in public or private collections. Such things are not without interest; but it is seldom that they add to our knowledge of the man.

If, however, Wolfe is to be estimated aright, the last phases of the battle on the Plains of Abraham and the subsequent fortunes of his army must be briefly traced. The defeated French, hotly pursued, made for the bridge over the St. Charles. Many of them rushed first towards the town, and though few actually passed the gates the majority of these fugitives took a long time to reach the bridge. Indeed, had Wolfe's dying orders to Burton been executed, a very large number of the French regulars would probably have been captured. Even as it was, such a result was only averted by a body of Canadian militia, who rallied in cover at the edge of the Côte d'Abraham and for a few minutes held up the pursuing Highlanders, most of whom had thrown away their muskets when they charged. Meanwhile, Townshend had assumed command of the British, Monckton having been seriously wounded. Finding the pursuing troops in much disorder and expecting an attack from Bougainville, he ordered them to break off the action and form up on the Plains.

Bougainville, in fact was rapidly approaching. At dawn he had been at Saint-Augustin. Finding to his surprise that no Brit-

ish ships were in sight, he had gone to Cap Rouge. Thence, having received Vaudreuil's note and grasping the situation better than its writer, he hastened towards Quebec. Shortly before eleven o'clock he was nearing the Samos battery, but being fired upon from there, he turned to the left, and gaining the road from Sainte-Foye, advanced eastward along it. When, however, he saw the British force awaiting him on the Plains of Abraham in order of battle, he prudently refrained from attacking, and retreated some seven miles to Ancienne Lorette.

From the landing at the Foulon to the withdrawal of Bougainville, the British loss was 58 killed and 597 wounded. That is to say, more than an eighth of those engaged had been put out of action. Theoretically, the position of Townshend's force was most precarious. Though the French losses far exceeded the British, their numbers were still superior, and the troops on the Plains were threatened on three sides. Townshend, as the rules of the art of war demanded, at once began to entrench himself and, with the ardent co-operation of the navy, to bring artillery and stores up the cliffs. In reality, however, the battle had placed Quebec at the mercy of the victors, and many of those present held that the town might have been carried in the first rush of the pursuit. The fortifications were not—and never had been—capable of withstanding a bombardment of any power. Besides, there was no heart in the defenders. Only one man, Montcalm, might have inspired them to a desperate resistance, and he was dying from a wound received while valiantly trying to rally his fleeing army. And even Montcalm, in a note which he addressed to the British commander, took it for granted that Quebec must forthwith surrender. Ramezay was a brave man; but he had little food in the town, he could not trust the garrison, and he was pressed by leading civilians to avert the horrors that would ensue if the place were stormed. Nothing, however, so damaged the cause of the

French as the conduct of Vaudreuil and Bigot. They came near to making formal surrender of the whole of Canada; but finally contented themselves with running away on the night of the battle towards Jacques Cartier, by way of Charlesbourg and Lorette, followed by the troops in the Beauport lines, as these discovered that their leaders had vanished. Though they left behind, without telling anyone, food that would have sufficed the townspeople for several days, Vaudreuil before setting out sent to Ramezay a message authorising him to surrender the city forty-eight hours after the army should evacuate the Beauport shore. It was to Ramezay's credit that he did not capitulate until September 17, and then only when a general assault was on the point of being launched by the British. The victors occupied the town next day.

The fall of Quebec made inevitable the conquest of Canada unless the city could be recaptured before the British could attempt further operations. The slowness of Amherst, who did not even approach Montreal that year, gave Vaudreuil a chance to save New France at the last moment. During the winter, the British army at Quebec under the command of Murray suffered great privation and loss, and in early spring down from Montreal came the Chevalier de Lévis, with every man he could muster, to snatch the place from its captors before British ships could get up the ice-blocked river. It would unfortunately take too long to tell of his victory over Murray near Sainte-Foye, of the subsequent siege of Quebec, or of the relief of the garrison — only just in time — by a British naval squadron. Once the British were secured in their hold on the city, the French leaders seemed to lose all stomach for resistance, and hardly a blow was struck to hinder the convergent advance of Murray from Quebec, Haviland from Lake Champlain, and Amherst from Lake Ontario, which ended in the surrender of Canada by Vaudreuil at Montreal on September 8, 1760.

In view of the events just sketched, there is no gainsaying the

importance of what Wolfe accomplished. Seldom, indeed, has there been a more fruitful victory than his. But it has been contended that, well as he did, he should have done still better. It was, we are told, only a second-best plan that he was putting into execution when he fell. For it was in his power to bring about the capture not only of Quebec but of the whole French army. Had he done so, the conquest of Canada would have been virtually completed, the risk of having to relinquish Quebec would never have arisen, and the elaborate and costly campaign of 1760 need not have been undertaken. The arguments in support of this criticism are much stronger than those usually advanced to discredit Wolfe's previous conduct of the siege, and they have lately been formidably voiced by Colonel William Wood, whose opinion, weighty because of his great knowledge of the subject, is rendered additionally so because of his continued admiration for Wolfe.

For the French army at Quebec, Colonel Wood points out, the "one possible line of supply and retreat was to the west, preferably of course by the St. Lawrence, so far as this was feasible, but also by the single upper road which led the whole way west to Montreal. Now, at Quebec itself, and for a good many miles west, there was a lower road, in the valley of the St. Charles, which eventually joined the upper road. If, therefore, Wolfe could entrench astride of this upper road, westward of its junction with the lower road, then, while the fleet barred the river abreast of these entrenchments, Montcalm would have no choice but to fight, starve, or surrender; and both sides knew that Wolfe's army . . . would, in such a position, be able to prevent at all events the main body of Montcalm's mixed forces from ever getting past." Colonel Wood goes on to say that a landing at Pointe aux Trembles would have fulfilled "the strategical conditions mentioned," whereas by landing at the Foulon Wolfe left open the door through which Vaudreuil retreated. Eminent

modern authorities, naval, military, and academic, are named by Colonel Wood as endorsing this criticism; and Lord Wolseley is quoted as writing that while Wolfe was "a first-rate Commanding officer of a Battalion," he did not in the Quebec campaign "display any originality or any great genius for war."

At the time when their criticisms of Wolfe were made, not one of the distinguished officers cited by Colonel Wood had ever conducted the siege of a fortified town or directed operations against European regular soldiers. One or two of them, it is true, did later on have the opportunity of showing what they could do against trained European opponents; but their performances have not increased the force of their strictures. Colonel Wood's contentions, however, do not need so spectacular an escort. They command respect in themselves.

Colonel Wood does not make it quite clear where the vital road-junction was situated, and indeed it is not easy to find out. Until recent times rivers were far more important than roads as means of communication in eastern Canada; and the roads are shown on few maps and noticed by fewer writers. It appears, however, that if you wished to go from Quebec to Montreal, you had the choice of three roads as you set out. The first led through Sillery, the second through Sainte-Foye; these two converged at Cap Rouge. The third, which followed the low ground near the St. Charles river, led to Ancienne Lorette, whence there was a cross road to Saint Augustin, where it joined the continuation of routes one and two to form the single highway to Montreal. To command all land routes from Quebec to the west, it was thus not necessary for Wolfe to go as far as Pointe aux Trembles; the vital point was Saint-Augustin, six miles lower down.¹

¹ There was a road which branched from the one between Ancienne Lorette and Saint-Augustin near the Cap Rouge river, and ran in a westerly direction towards Pointe aux Trembles; but after a few miles it degenerated into a mere trail, useless for artillery or military transport.

Now every one of these routes out of Quebec was commanded by the British as soon as they established themselves on the Plains of Abraham. They were actually astride of the first two during the battle, and they had detachments on the third an hour or two later. No large body of men could escape from the city without challenge from the British army or the British fleet. But most of the French army was not in Quebec at all; it was in the Beauport lines beyond the St. Charles. And there it had at its service several roads whereby it could withdraw through Charlesbourg and gain Petite or Indian Lorette on the St. Charles river, and thence reach Ancienne Lorette and Saint-Augustin. It was thus that Vaudreuil got away on the night of September 13, and by this route he subsequently communicated with the city. Wolfe would of course have defeated his purpose if he had occupied Saint-Augustin. But, so far as the city of Quebec was concerned, the British would have been much less menacing there than they were on the Plains.

Still, if Wolfe had been at Saint-Augustin, the French army could not have escaped without a fight. And if it had tried to cut its way through, a great part of it would probably have been destroyed. But suppose that, instead of trying to escape, it had entrenched itself somewhere between Saint-Augustin and Quebec, waiting for Wolfe's next move. No doubt the French were short of supplies, especially in the city; but the confidential correspondence of their leaders does not suggest that the plight of the army was desperate, and it certainly left great quantities of food behind when it evacuated the camps near Beauport. Further, it now had access to the north shore beyond the Montmorency, and, notwithstanding the ravages of the British, there were still resources in that direction. Resolute men can hold out on short rations for a long time, especially when they know that there is a strict time-limit to the operations of the enemy. In any case, it is not certain that the French would have considered their

prospects to be fatally injured by the establishment of a British force at Saint-Augustin. Of course they valued the road as a means of communicating with the west. But though the road had hitherto been free, while the river above Quebec had long known the presence of British ships, they had continued to send their biggest convoys by water and had been on the whole successful in getting them through. Wolfe, at all events, had no right to assume that a landing at Saint-Augustin would occasion that pitched battle which he had always been anxious to provoke.

Now if the French remained on the defensive, what was Wolfe to do? Advance from Saint-Augustin on Quebec and attack them in their positions? The march would doubtless be harassed by the Canadians and Indians, and at the end he would, as on July 31, be compelled to assault a fortified position held by an enemy superior in numbers to himself. Besides, which road should he choose for his advance? To divide his army and use them all would have been suicidal. If, however, he kept his force united he would give the French a chance of slipping round his flank; and the strategic advantages of a landing at Saint-Augustin would have been thrown away.

Would it, then, have been wise of Wolfe to entrench himself at Saint-Augustin and wait until the French were starved out? His position would have been no pleasant one. In the first place, he would have been much less dangerous to Quebec itself than he had been since the siege began. Moreover, the force with him would have been exposed to grave peril. His sole line of communication was the river. Some modern writers seem to think that at this time the British control of the St. Lawrence was complete and unchallenged. The British themselves had no such delusion. Apart from wind and weather, which often frustrated their plans, the French batteries, on both land and water, were most troublesome. For some time in August Holmes and Murray were completely cut off from the main force

at and below Quebec, the French having regained command of the river from Sillery to Cap Rouge. And though the British force above the town had since been strengthened, Wolfe was far from thinking that it could do what it liked. In his dispatch of September 9 he writes, "We have seven hours and sometimes (above the town after rain) near eight hours of the most violent ebb tide that can be imagined, which loses us an infinite deal of time in every operation on the water; and the stream is so strong, particularly here [off Cap Rouge], that the ships often drag their anchors by the mere force of the current. The bottom is a bed of rock; so that a ship, unless it hooks a rugged rock, holds by the weight only of the anchor. Doubtless, if the equinoctial gale has any force, a number of ships must necessarily run ashore and be lost." In the storm at the very beginning of the siege, he says, all the whaleboats and most of the cutters were stove in, and of the flat-bottomed boats some were destroyed and some damaged. "We never had half as many of the latter as are necessary for this extraordinary and very important service. The enemy is able to fight us upon the water whenever we are out of reach of the cannon of the fleet." Wolfe's journal, as we have seen, reveals that, whatever he may have said openly, he was not always satisfied with the zeal shown by the navy in supporting the troops.

No doubt Wolfe might have landed sufficient supplies to support a large force for some weeks even if he were cut off from his base. Still, no general likes to feel that he cannot replace the food his men eat and the ammunition they expend. And there was a further consideration which seems to have been almost wholly overlooked. If Wolfe's force up the river were cut off from Point Lévy and the Ile Orléans, it was the troops at these places that would have been in the greatest danger. It would have been foolhardy for Wolfe to challenge the whole French army with a force smaller than that which actually fought the

battle of the Plains. In other words, he could spare only some 1500 men to guard the camps at Point Lévy and on the island.² That number might suffice so long as Montcalm believed the main force of the besiegers to be distributed between those places. But he would soon discover the truth. Of course the two camps were protected from attack by the ships; but it would have been possible for parties of Canadians and Indians to steal across the north channel to the Ile d'Orléans, until they mustered a sufficient force to make the lot of the British garrison extremely unpleasant, if not intolerable. And even the artillery at Pointe aux Pères would not have been immune from capture. On a dark night with a westerly wind, Montcalm might well have managed to throw across the river above the town a body of soldiers strong enough to do great damage among the British batteries. While the main British camps had been in sight of one another, Wolfe's division of his force had been defensible: but to have transferred the greater part of his army to a point where it might easily be cut off from communicating with the remainder, and to have left that remainder within sight of Montcalm and his main force would have been the height of rashness.

One is forced to the conclusion that the risk of landing anywhere above the town could only be justified if such an operation produced a prompt decision. That could not be guaranteed unless the British came at once within artillery range of the ramshackle fortifications of Quebec. In that event, Montcalm, as Wolfe correctly calculated, would feel compelled to fight an immediate action. It is important, furthermore, to remember that Wolfe's health might again betray him at any moment. His brigadiers were all men of some ability, but their previous and subsequent achievements do not suggest that any of them was

² On September 13 there seem to have been no more than 1350 men at the two camps. After September 20, they might have been strengthened by some of Major Scott's force, 1600 strong, which had been raiding down the river. But a large part of this would still have been needed for similar work.

capable of defeating Montcalm under the conditions that time, place, and circumstance imposed on them. All that Townshend had to do after Wolfe's death was to garner the fruits of his leader's skill. Wolfe may indeed be pardoned if he thought it essential to the success of the British that a decision should be forced while he was still able to retain command.

The fact remains of course that the greater part of the French army escaped. Wolfe, indeed, had dealt it an irreparable blow. The regular regiments had been terribly cut up, and the survivors seem never to have regained confidence in themselves. The whole army, in fact, displayed henceforth a sense of inferiority which arose entirely from their experience at the battle of the Plains. When in superior numbers, they fought well at the battle of Sainte-Foye, but the general behaviour of both officers and men during the campaign of 1760 was deplorably lacking in resolution. Still, Wolfe would of course deserve more praise had there been no need for the campaign at all. And one may well wonder whether, if he had survived the battle, it would have been necessary. Had Colonel Burton marched the 48th down to the bridge, not many of the French regulars would have got away, and in that case Vaudreuil, who came near to surrendering as things were, would probably have yielded to despair. Writing in England during the following winter, before Englishmen knew of the French rally in Canada, a staff-officer of the besieging force declared that Wolfe had considered how to prevent the escape of the French army. Doubtless he counted on a chance of destroying it on the field of battle, for he cannot have anticipated that the French would throw away the advantage of superior numbers. But when he found that they still had many men safe on the other side of the St. Charles, he would — if we may judge from all we know of his character and experience — have taken instant measures to forestall their retreat. Townshend has been generally commended for breaking off the

pursuit and digging himself in on the Plains; it was all quite correct, and his devotion to the text-book had its reward in the fall of Quebec four days later. Nevertheless, Wolfe would have done something else. He would hardly, for instance, have allowed Bougainville to hold Ancienne Lorette unmolested from noon till night on September 13. But we are here in the unstable world of supposition, where it is seldom wise to linger. What should be remembered is that it was not from Wolfe but from Townshend that the French army escaped.

Reviewing all relevant considerations, we should, I think, conclude that while a landing at Saint-Augustin or above might possibly have brought about the surrender of Canada that year, it was on the whole less likely to lead to a British victory than the plan actually adopted by Wolfe. At any rate, he had very cogent reasons for his course of action, which, there is no denying, caused the fall of Quebec, inflicted great loss on the French army, and destroyed the "will to victory" of what was left. Such an achievement alone proves that Wolfe possessed something more than that "smattering of elemental strategy" which (according to Victorian satirists) was lacking in the general who thought him only a good battalion commander.

There is little purpose in reporting what people said about Wolfe after his death. There was of course a chorus of praise and lament from statesmen, preachers, and publicists. It does not prove much, since even had Wolfe deserved all the criticism which has been passed on his conduct of the siege, his contemporaries would have lauded him just as they did. For it is seldom that a man's death has occurred in circumstances so favourable to his renown. The war had not been going well for Britain, and Wolfe's last dispatches had prepared men's minds for the news that the siege of Quebec had failed. And then suddenly came the tidings that the city was taken and the French army beaten. The triumph, too, scarcely pleased people more than

the means whereby it had been achieved. A silent voyage in small boats by night on the bosom of a mighty river, a stealthy landing in the mysterious glimmer of dawn, a secret ascent of a stupendous precipice — what could be more thrilling to a generation which knew not the romantic novel, the yellow press, or the moving picture? And the man who had contrived all this — only thirty-two and betrothed to a beautiful girl — dying at the moment of victory, his last breath a sigh of content. One would despise the British people of that time if they had not been deeply moved. But what they said in their admiration and grief is not of great value to the historian.

Wolfe's body was taken to England on board the *Royal William* man-of-war. On November 17 it was carried ashore at Portsmouth with much naval and military pomp, amid the booming of minute guns and the tolling of muffled bells. Thence it was conveyed by road to his mother's house at Blackheath, and on the night of November 20 it was quietly laid in the family vault at St. Alphege's church, Greenwich.

The war continued, and exciting events followed one another in quick succession. After some months the nation learned, to its astonishment, that Quebec was in danger of being lost again. When that misfortune was averted, it soon had other things than Canada to think about. The conquest of Canada was regarded as a blow to France, Britain's great foe in Europe, and very few understood that it was, from the British standpoint, by far the most important event of the whole war. Thus the country's debt to Wolfe was not properly estimated. The Government refused — though Pitt disapproved of its conduct — to vote the paltry sum required to enable his executors to carry out the terms of his will, which he had made when under a misapprehension as to the way in which his father had disposed of his property. The last years of his mother, moreover, were embittered by a dispute with the Government as to the amount of pay that was owing to

Wolfe at his death. Technically, it seems, the War Office was right, and Mrs. Wolfe was no doubt a cantankerous and importunate old lady; but this was surely a case for asking Parliament to meet the difficulty by a generous recognition of the dead general's services. But Parliament never voted anything to Wolfe but thanks and a monument in Westminster Abbey. Even that had not been erected when Mrs. Wolfe died in 1764. And considering what it proved to be like when at last unveiled in 1773, the delay might well have been indefinitely prolonged.

Long before, some of the inhabitants of Westerham had commemorated Wolfe by a tablet in their parish church, and Lord Temple, who was one day to represent Wolfe as a braggart, had been instigated by Pitt to erect an obelisk in his honour on his estate at Stowe in Buckinghamshire. From time to time his fame has received the tribute of other monuments. The most notable are the tall column which stands on the spot where he died, the obelisk commemorating both him and Montcalm in the Governor's Garden at Quebec, and the statue of him on Westerham Green. In the army there has always been a lively tradition of his professional efficiency and zeal. Elsewhere, however, his renown soon became a little vague. It was more than a century before his biography was competently written. And he never quite gained a place in the popular gallery of national heroes. He figures on the signboards of few English inns, among the frequenters of which his contemporaries the King of Prussia and the Marquis of Granby seem to have been more highly esteemed. Nor does he often appear in ballads or folk-songs.³ Cowper has some laudatory lines about him in "The Task," but otherwise the poets have scarcely noticed him. In the past sixty years several biographies of him have appeared, and his character, abilities, and exploits have been the objects

³ Two of the songs that celebrate Wolfe's victory and death are quoted in Appendix IV.

of meticulous investigation and the themes of heated controversy. Nevertheless, his name has not become familiar in the mouths of Englishmen or Canadians, and the two hundredth anniversary of his birth provoked astonishingly little interest and no apparent enthusiasm. Yet he was assuredly a man worthy of commemoration—a zealous servant of his calling, a self-sacrificing lover of his country, and not least among the founders of the Dominion of Canada and the British Commonwealth of Nations.

APPENDIX I

WOLFE AND GRAY'S *ELEGY*

EVERYONE knows the story that, as the boats drifted down from Cap Rouge to the Anse au Foulon in the early hours of September 13, Wolfe recited passages from Gray's *Elegy* and said that he would rather have written the poem than take Quebec. Most recent writers on Wolfe have rejected the tale, urging that Wolfe would never have transgressed his own orders for strict silence and pointing out that in all accounts of the incident which rest on respectable authority Wolfe is made to mention "to-morrow" as the time when the French were to be fought. It is, however, widely agreed that Wolfe recited and praised the *Elegy* some time on September 12, perhaps when reconnoitring from a boat.

The story, in all its forms, seems ultimately to be based on the testimony of one man, John Robison, who was at the siege of Quebec in the capacity of tutor to the son of Admiral Knowles and later became Professor of Natural Philosophy in Edinburgh University. Unfortunately, he never wrote the story down; and it is evident that those who heard it carried away widely differing impressions of what he said. There are extant three versions by men who heard the tale from his lips. The earliest appears in a letter written on February 10, 1804, by William Wallace Currie, a student in Edinburgh University, to his father, Dr. James Currie, a scientist of some repute: the writer says that Robison had told him the story in the previous week. In 1805 Robison died, and ten years later his successor, Professor John Playfair, read an account of his life to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, in whose *Transactions* (vii, 495 sqq.) it

was printed. In 1830, Sir Walter Scott, writing to Southey, gave a version of the story which differs considerably from both Currie's and Playfair's.

Now this is not the place for a thorough criticism of the evidence. But it seems to me that insufficient attention has hitherto been paid to Currie's version. It is printed in vol. ii, p. 248 of his own "Memoir of the Life, Writings, and Correspondence of James Currie," but as that work is not readily accessible to most people, the passage may be quoted here:

"I supped at Professor Robison's last week, and spent a very agreeable evening. I had some interesting conversation with him. He had stated to us at the lecture, that at Quebec he had had an opportunity of seeing some shells discharged from the mortar, alluding to the doctrine of projectiles, of which he was treating, and I spoke to him on the subject. He told me that General Wolfe kept his intention of attacking Quebec a most profound secret; not even disclosing it to the Second in Command, and that the night before the attack nothing was known. The boats were ordered to drop down the St. Lawrence, and it happened that the boat which Professor Robison, then a midshipman, commanded, was very near the one General Wolfe was in. A gentleman was repeating Gray's Elegy to the latter, and Mr. Robison heard him (the General) say, 'I would rather have been the author of that piece than beat the French to-morrow'; and from this remark guessed that the attack was to be made the next day."

Let it be remembered that the writer was a young man of twenty, an age when the memory is active and tenacious. He had evidently, moreover, been intensely interested in the Professor's conversation. When Playfair gave his version, he could not have heard the story for about ten years; when Scott gave his, it was a quarter of a century since Robison's death. In short, one would expect Currie to be the best witness of the three.

His story, too, seems to me more convincing in itself than

either of the others. Three objections may be raised to it. First, Robison was not a midshipman; he was merely "rated as a midshipman." The point is no doubt important to the nautical mind; but a university undergraduate might overlook the distinction without impairing his reputation as a trustworthy witness. Next, there is the difficulty that Wolfe is charged with breaking his own injunction about silence. Suppose, however, that his remark was made before the boats left the *Sutherland*. At that stage there would have been no need for the higher officers to keep absolutely silent; indeed, the French on shore must have been accustomed to hear the sound of voices from the ships, and any ostentatious stillness would have aroused their suspicions. It is true that Currie implies that Wolfe's remark was made after the boats had begun to drift down stream. But most of the boats which assembled close to the *Sutherland* had already drifted some way, and to those in them anything that happened while they were getting into order alongside the flagship would be remembered as happening during, not before, the voyage. Thirdly, there is the word "to-morrow." The boats did not begin to gather near the *Sutherland* till after 1.30 A.M. The battle was to be fought that same day, not on the morrow. But when one sits up after midnight, does one naturally speak of the hours after the next sunrise as "to-day"? I can only say that at two in the morning events which are expected to occur at nine or ten seem to me to be things of to-morrow, and in ordinary conversation I should refer to them as such.

I am inclined therefore to regard Currie's narrative as the best report of what Robison used to tell. But the relative merits of Currie, Playfair, and Scott as witnesses, and indeed the trustworthiness of Robison himself, are not matters of great moment. The story just discussed used to be important as a proof that Wolfe was interested in the poetry of his own day. But since his own copy of the *Elegy* came to light it matters little whether it is

true or not. It is evident from the state of the book that it had been enthusiastically read and carefully pondered. Among the lines underscored are "The paths of glory lead but to the grave," and "On some fond breast the parting soul relies." It must be confessed that Wolfe's marginal comments are not particularly profound. Thus, opposite the lines,


"Chill Penury repressed their noble rage
And froze the genial current of their soul,"

he wrote, "How ineffectual are oft our own unaided Exertions especially in early Life! How many shining Lights owe to Patronage and Affluence what their Talents would never procure them!" But it is unfair to condemn Wolfe for falling in with the fashion of an age addicted to platitude.

There are interesting articles on this subject by Prof. E. E. Morris (*English Historical Review*, xv [1900], 125 sqq.), Col. W. Wood (*In the Heart of Old Canada*, 30 sqq.), and Mr. Beckles Willson (*The Nineteenth Century and After*, April, 1913).

APPENDIX II

WOLFE AND JERVIS

 ON THE evening of September 12 Wolfe, it is said, called into his cabin on the *Sutherland* John Jervis, commander of the *Porcupine* sloop and afterwards famous as the victor of St. Vincent, and entrusted to his charge his will, a note-book, and a miniature of Katharine Lowther. The story appears in Tucker's "Memoirs of John Jervis," and has been generally accepted by Wolfe's biographers. It seems to be based merely on a family tradition, which, when it can be tested, is found to be grossly inaccurate. Thus, it alleges that the *Porcupine* was the first British ship to pass Quebec; whereas we know from her log that she never went above the town at all. It states, too, that Jervis delivered the miniature to Miss Lowther; but as a matter of fact she had it from Mrs. Wolfe, who received it from Captain Bell. Now the tale of the *Porcupine's* exploit is a distortion of a real event; for on July 8 she took up her station under heavy fire in the channel between the mouth of the Montmorency and the Ile d'Orléans in order to cover the landing of the British troops which took place next night. The *Porcupine* remained in the North Channel off the Ile d'Orléans until the end of the siege. Jervis must thus have been in close touch with Wolfe while the British headquarters were at the Montmorency camp. Both men had crossed the Atlantic on the *Neptune*, and Jervis had been at Swinden's school in Greenwich, though not until long after Wolfe had left. It is therefore likely that they were on friendly terms with each other. On the other hand, there is in the McCord Museum at McGill University a letter written by Jervis in 1798, in which the old admiral speaks of

Wolfe in a way which certainly does not suggest that their friendship was intimate. Still, it is not incredible that the will and other things were really entrusted to Jervis. But this is far more likely to have happened on July 30 than on September 12, when it was Jervis's duty to be on the *Porcupine*, twelve miles and more from where Wolfe was on the *Sutherland*. On July 30 Wolfe had, as we have seen, just added a codicil to his will; he knew that he would be exposed to great danger next day, and he did in fact have several narrow escapes during the action.

APPENDIX III

WOLFE'S LAST MOMENTS

THE account of Wolfe's last moments given on p. 296 is substantially that of Captain Knox, who had investigated the various versions that were current when his journal was published. Knox has been followed by most later writers. In volume III, chapter xii, of his work, "The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham," Dr. Doughty has discussed the authorities on the subject that were known when the book was written. In March 1923, however, he printed in *The Canadian Historical Review* a previously unpublished letter written in 1792 to Governor Simcoe by Samuel Holland, who had been a captain in Wolfe's army at the siege. In the letter Holland gives a good deal of information about the operations in the summer of 1759, and claims to have been one of those who attended Wolfe when he was dying. He was, he says, seeking Wolfe to make a report, when he found him being carried off the field. He confirms Knox's statement that four persons were present at Wolfe's death, and that the dying man heard of the French flight. But he says, "From the time I came to him he never uttered a single syllable."

In some quarters there has been a tendency to accept Holland as discrediting Knox and the numerous other writers who report words alleged to have been spoken by Wolfe after he was fatally hit. New evidence, however, is not necessarily better than old; and when Holland's letter is critically examined, its value is seen to be small. Either he was a liar or he had a very bad memory, for many of his statements are grossly and demonstrably false. For instance, he says that Wolfe did not expect any substantial

results from the battle of Montmorency, but meant it simply as a feint. He dates it after Murray's expedition up the river in August, and declares that it was followed "almost instantly" by the evacuation of the Montmorency camp. There are many other inaccuracies which need not be specified. It may be mentioned, however, that his account of his movements at the Battle of the Plains is open to strong suspicion. In short, he is not a witness whose unsupported word can be upheld against a great mass of contradictory evidence. Besides, there is one utterance attributed to the dying Wolfe which bears the hall-mark of authenticity — his order to Colonel Burton. That was never invented. Whatever we may think of the other sayings put into Wolfe's mouth by various authorities, it seems safe to deny Holland's assertion that he died in silence.

APPENDIX IV
VERSE ON WOLFE'S DEATH.

A

This is one of the few folk-songs about Wolfe. It evidently reflects the views of the rank and file. The curious fourth verse is probably based on rumours of his bequests to his friends.

Bold General Wolfe to his men did say,
"Come, lads, and follow without delay,
To yonder mountain that is so high.
Don't be down-hearted,
Don't be down-hearted, but gain the victory.

"There stand the French on the summit high,
While we poor lads in the valley lie;
I see them falling, like motes in the sun,
Through smoke and fire,
Through smoke and fire, all from the British gun!"

The first of volleys to us they gave,
In his left breast wounded Wolfe so brave.
Yonder he lies, for he cannot stand;
Yet fight on boldly,
Yet fight on boldly, but he can still command.

"Here's all my treasure that you behold,
A thousand guineas in shining gold;
Share it among you," brave Wolfe did say,
"You're welcome to it,
You're welcome to it, since you have gained the day.

"When to old England you do return,
Tell all my friends I am dead and gone;
And bid my mother, so kind and dear,
No tears to shed for me,
No tears to shed for me, — a hero's grave awaits me here!"

B

The following verses, published as a broadsheet in 1761, illustrate the feelings which the exploits of Wolfe and Amherst excited in the breasts of New Englanders.

A FINAL CONQUEST OF CANADA

OR,

GOD REIGNING OVER HIS AND OUR ENEMIES

Come all ye Sons of *Brittane*,
Come Celebrate this Jubille:
Releas'd from Wars, and bloody Thralls
Of Popish and perfidious Gauls.
When GOD Eternal laid the Plan
T' advance his glorious Grace by Man:
By facts of Wisdom, Power and Might,
To Honour Justice, Truth and Right.
The wrath of Man shall praise his Name,
And the remainder He'll restrain.
He saw before all Worlds were made,
Each Line of Battle, each Parade.
Moses and *Joshua* must Lead,
Sampson and *Gideon* succeed.
Baruck and *Deb'rah* too he sent,
And *Sisera* to *Jael's* Tent. —
With Valient WOLFE for *Canada*,
To Curb the Gallic's Boasted sway;
Brave *Wolfe* who shar'd so large a part
In every Loyal English Heart,
He to defend our Liberties
Yeilded His Life a Sacrifice:
Whose Worth our latest Pens imploy;
And Heaven Crown with endless Joy.
Murray Succeeds and doth Inherit,
A double portion of his Spirit.



A final Conquest of CANADA: OR, GOD Reigning over His and Our Enemies.

COME all ye Sons of *Brittane*,
Come Celebrate this Jubile:
Reliev'd from Wars, and bloody Thralls
Of Popish and perfidious Gaub.
When GOD Eternal laid the Plan
T' advance his glorious Grace by Man:
By facts of Wisdom, Power and Might,
To Honour Justice, Truth and Right.
The wrath of Man shall praise his Name,
And the remainder He'll restrain.
He saw before all Worlds were made,
Each Line of Battle, each Parade.
Moses and *Josua* must Lead,
Gampson and *Gideon* succeed.
Barack and *Dab'rab* too he sent,
An *Sijera* to *Jael's* Tent. ---
With Valiant *Wolfe* for *Canada*,
To turn the Gallie's Boasted way;
Brave *Wolfe* who shal' so large a part
In every loyal English Heart,
He to defend our Liberties
Said His Life a sacrifice:
Whole Worth our latest Pens employ;
And Heaven Crown with endless Joy.
Murray Succeeds and doth inherit
A double portion of his Spirit.
As *Wolfe* did prince like Courage now,
So this, pursued the Flying Foe,
'Till our red Flag, doth Beautify
The Bastions of old *Canada*,
When the Remainder come to view
Our Ships sent home --- and we but few.
They come against us Drunk with rage,
Whom War-like *Murray* doth engage.
'Till flying like the timorous Doe,
They leave their Arms and Baggage too.
Curs'd be the Bard --- that doth not Sing
Our Hero's Praise --- GOD SAVE THE KING.
Blest be the Soldiers, who expose
Their precious Lives, to quell our Foes.
Yea blest the Angels who came down,
And spread their Wings to shield us round.
But far below our Praises fall
Of HIM who did inspire them All.
Victorious *Murray* marches now,
To drive the Country through and through.
The yielding Country fall and bend,
Like Leaves by an Impetuous Wind.
Where he with Noted *AMHERST* meets,
Who oft perform'd such glorious feats.
His Name alone, without a Blow,
Clear'd two brave Bastions of the Foe.
Still pressing on and bearing down,
Their Strength and Honor to the ground.
All Glory to the LORD of Hosts,
Hisannah's sound through all our Coasts.

The GOD of Armies is our Shield,
Old *Jacob's* GOD maintains the Field.
And now the happy hours Advance,
For the whole Conquest of New France.
Our General's met on either side,
The Enemies last Defence and Pride.
'Twas *Montreal* that famous Town,
Where all their Peers of high Renown,
Had fled, & their last Retreat --- gee,
With all the strength of *Canada*.
Here stand ye Still, the Eternal said,
My Power alone shall be display'd.
No humane Blood shall here be spill'd,
Yet your Demands be all fulfill'd.
Accordingly they do Comply,
Without Resistance, instantly.
In Seventeen Hundred Sixty, Date,
They humbly did Capitulate:
Nor shall the Day forgotten be
Unto the last Posterity.
Our Sovereign *GEORGE*, for Prince they own,
While *Amherst* held in high Renown,
Into the City enters straight,
A Band of Musick on him wait.
There bright Attendance at his Feet,
With Compliments and Thanks to greet.
There Marching in the Front and Rear,
The Infantry and Grenadier,
With Flag and with Artillery,
The Musick sounds, the Colours fly,
With each possession neatly Tim'd,
The Noise of Honour was confin'd.
To Crown the Triumphs of the Day,
War now King *GEORGE* and *CANADA*.
The Host are now in all their Ranks,
Intituled to the General's Thanks,
For all their Bravery and Zeal,
And he assures them that he will,
Endear them to his Majesty,
Also the Indian True Ally.
Faithful and Valliant in their Chace,
And did much Service in their Place.
Our cheerful Hosts with Thanks reply,
Long live King *GEORGE* of *CANADA*.
And let our General's Fame arise,
'Till Time and Fame and Nature Dies,
Consorts of Harmony arise,
And echo to the expanded Skies;
'Till lulling Angels catch the sound,
And make *Jehovah's* Praile resound,
Who hath his Church with Blessings crown'd,
While Antichrist falls to the Ground.
There may he set his Kingdom up,
Where Satan once bestall'd the Pope.
Lebanon, February 6. 1761.
MARTHA BREWSTER.

XIX. "A final Conquest of Canada or, God Reigning over His and Our Enemies."

The text is printed in modern type in Appendix IV. The woodcut is ascribed to James Thomson, a silver engraver of Boston. This rare broadside is the property of the Robert Fridenberg Galleries, New York, by whose courtesy it is reproduced.

As *Wolfe* did prince like Courage show,
So this, pursued the Flying Foe,
'Till our red Flag, doth Beautify
The Bastions of old Canady,
When the Remainder come to view,
Our Ships sent home — and we bit few,
They come against us Drunk with rage,
Whom War like *Murray* doth engage,
'Till flying like the timerous Doe,
They leave their Arms and Baggage too.
Curs'd be the Bard — that doth not Sing
Our Hero's Praise — GOD SAVE THE KING.
Blest be the Soldiers, who expose
Their precious Lives, to quell our Foes.
Yea bless the Angels who came down,
And spread their Wings to shield us round.
But far below our Praises fall
Of HIM who did inspire them All.
Victorious *Murray* marches now,
To drive the Country through and through.
The yielding Country fall and bend,
Like Leaves by an Impetuous Wind.
Where he with Noted AMHERST meets,
Who oft perform'd such glorious feats.
His Name alone, without a Blow,
Clear'd two brave Bastions of the Foe.
Still pressing on and bearing down,
Their Strength and Honor to the ground.
All Glory to the LORD of Hosts,
Hosannah's found through all our Coasts.
The GOD of Armies is our Sheild,
Old *Jacob's* GOD maintains the Feild.
And now the happy hours Advance,
For the whole Conquest of New France.
Our General's met on either side,
The Enemies last Defence and Pride.
'Twas *Montreal* that famous Town,
Where all their Peers of high Renown,

Had fled as their last Re—fu—gee,
With all the strength of *Canade*.
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My power alone shall be display'd.
No humane Blood shall here be spill'd,
Yet your Demands be all fulfill'd.
Accordingly they do Comply,
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In Seventeen-Hundred Sixty, Date,
They humbly did Capitulate:
Nor shall the Day forgotten be
Unto the last Posteritee.
Our Sovereign GEORGE, for Prince they own,
While AMHERST held in high Renown,
Into the City enters streight,
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There bright Attendance at his Feet,
With Compliments and Thanks to Greet.
There Marching in the Front and Rear,
The Infantry and Grenadier,
With Flag and with Artillery,
The Musick sounds, the Colours fly,
With each possession neatly Tim'd,
The Note of Honour was confin'd,
To Crown the Triumphs of the Day,
Was now King GEORGE and CANADA.
The Host are now in all their Ranks,
Intituled to the General's Thanks,
For all their Bravery and Zeal,
And he assures them that he will,
Endear them to his Majesty,
Also the Indian True Ally.
Faithful and Valliant in their Chace,
And did much Service in their Place.
Our chearful Hosts with Thanks reply,
Long live King GEORGE of CANADY.
And let our General's Fame arise,
'Till Time and Fame and Nature Dies,

Consorts of Harmony arise,
And eccho to the expanded Skies;
'Till list'ning Angels catch the sound,
And make JEHOVAH's Praise resound,
Who hath his Church with Blessings crown'd,
While Antichrist falls to the Ground.
There may he set his Kingdom up,
Where Satan once Install'd the Pope.

Lebanon, February 6, 1761.

MARTHA BREWSTER.

C

The following extract from the *Pennsylvania Magazine* for March, 1775, is interesting for more than one reason. The words of the song are by the editor, Thomas Paine, afterwards famous as a free-thinker and revolutionary. Though now printed for the first time, the song had been written for a convivial club at Lewes in England, where Paine lived from 1768 to 1774. The publication of Paine's verses reflects the widespread belief among the American colonists that Wolfe would have been on their side in their quarrel with the British government. Indeed, Paine had already published (in the *Pennsylvania Journal*, Jan. 4, 1775) an imaginary dialogue between Wolfe and General Gage, then commanding the British troops in North America, and in this he makes Wolfe conjure Gage to resign his commission rather than use force against the colonists.

POETICAL ESSAYS

for March

To the PUBLISHER of the PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE

Most of our heroes, both ancient and modern, are celebrated in song of some kind or other. But as I know of none which pays

GENERAL WOLFE. A new Song. Engrav'd for the Peninsular Magazine.

Andante

In a mould'ring cave where the wrecked retreat. Britannia sat wasted with Care: She wept for her Wolfe, then ex-

-claim'd against Fate, and gave herself up to Despair. The walls of her Cell she had sculptur'd around, with the Exploits of her

favourite son and even the Dust as it lay on the Ground, was Engrav'd with some Deeds he had done.

Finis

that tribute to our immortal Wolfe, I herewith send you one. I have not pursued the worn out tract [*sic*] of modern song, but have thrown it into fable.

DEATH OF GENERAL WOLFE

*Set to Music by a gentleman of this country,
the words by ATLANTICUS.*

In a mouldering cave, where the wretched retreat,
Britannia sat wasted with care.
She wept for her Wolfe, then exclaim'd against fate,
And gave herself up to despair.
The walls of her cell she had sculptur'd around
With th' exploits of her favourite son;
And even the dust as it lay on the ground,
Was engrav'd with some deeds he had done.

II

The sire of the gods from his crystalline throne,
Beheld the disconsolate dame;
And mov'd at her tears, he sent Mercury down,
And these were the tidings that came:
Britannia forbear, not a sigh, not a tear
For thy Wolfe so deservedly lov'd;
Your grief shall be changed into triumphs of joy,
For Wolfe is not dead but remov'd.

III

The sons of the earth, the proud giants of old,
Have broke from their darksome abodes;¹
And such is the news, that in heaven 'tis told,
They're marching to war with the gods.
A council was held in the chamber of Jove,
And this was the final decree,

¹ The heathen mythology, after describing the defeat of the giants by Jupiter, says, that he confined them under mountains, &c.

That Wolfe should be call'd to the armies above,
And the charge was intrusted to me.

IV

To the plains of Quebec with the orders I flew,
He begg'd for a moment's delay;
And cried, O forbear! Let me victory hear,
And then the command I'll obey.
With a darkening film I encompass'd his eyes,
And convey'd him away in an urn,
Lest the fondness he bore for his own native shore,
Should tempt him again to return.

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